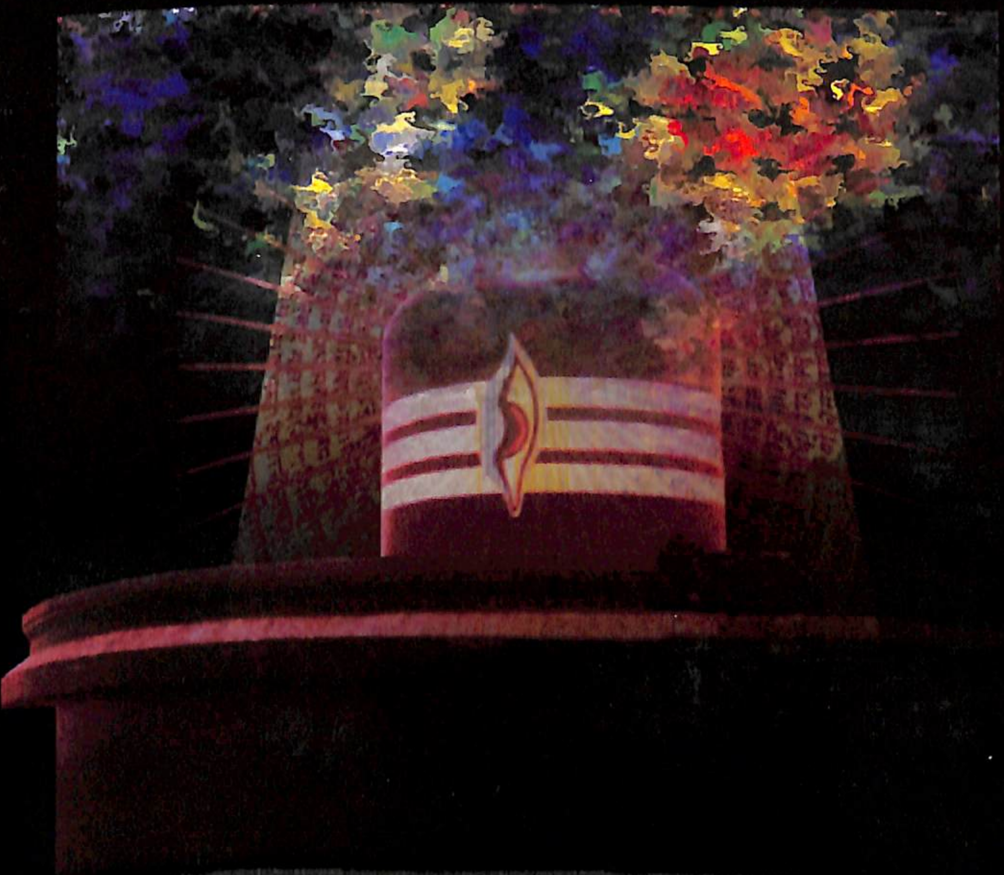
Kashmir Shaivism: Under Siege

M. G. Chitkara



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Opinion[1]

The book entitled *"Kashmir Shaivism: Under Siege"* is not only a history of Kashmir Shaivism and its present status, but is in itself a spiritual travelogue of the Valley. Whereas it depicts the human woe and misery, it also draws our pointed attention to human courage and tolerance and unwavering faith in God who is Shiva.

Foreign travellers and scholars have described Kashmiri Pandits as the finest specimens of the human race but the worst kind of beating on political, economic and all other fronts from 1990 has reduced some of the Pandits to the lowest depths of greed, ignorance, hypocrisy, false social pride and ego. The situation is precarious in Kashmiri Sharda Peeth in occupied Kashmir. Hindu scriptures like Kashmir Shaivism, are under siege and the situation requires Amrit Manthan.

Amrit Manthan: Where as Sharada allured scholars from far and wide for studies, discussing and debates common folks in large numbers visited it as pilgrims.

All of us are familiar with the story of Amrita manthan, coming down from the Vedas. Briefly, the Devas and Asuras jointly churned the Ocean of Milk to obtain nectar, Amrit, imbibing which would give immortality, everlasting youth and health. Using the mountain Mandarachal and churned, the serpent Vasuki being the churning rope, did the churning. Pulling one end of the rope were the Devas, numbering 33 crores and on the other end

1. Bishamber Lal Sud, Editor Parvat-Ki-Goonj; President World Peace Forum "Vishva Shanti Manch", The Ridge Shimla - 171001.

were the Asuras, numbering 66 crores. Initially, when it was suggested that the Asuras should hold the tail end, they refused saying that the tail is inauspicious. Thereupon, the Devas magnanimously offered the head portion to the Asuras and took the tail end themselves.

Soon the Mandarachal Mountain started sinking into the ocean floor under its own weight. The Supreme Lord Vishnu had to come to rescue the situation by taking the form of a huge tortoise on whose back the mountain could rest. Having thus placed the Mountain on a secure foundation, the Devas and Asuras got into action with full vigour.

The Asuras soon realised the folly of their demand to be on the head-end of the serpent; the serpent Vasuki started emitting a deadly poison, "Halahala, (Kalkoot) which was swallowed by the Lord Shiva with a view to save the world from destruction. Unable to bear the burning sensation caused by swallowing the poison. His consort, Parvati, standing by him got alarmed and promptly pressed the neck of Shiva. Thus obstructed, the poison, Halahala, could not travel down the body of Shiva and got lodged in his neck. Lord Shiva was, therefore, unharmed by the poison and got the epithet, Nilakantha, the blue necked.

Just as the Ocean of Milk was churned by using the serpent, Vasuki, as the rope, the life force Kundalini (coiled like a serpent in our subconscious) is awakened in the Yogic processes. To prevent the process of contemplation of the self from getting sunk in the mind, one has to base it on the foundation of Supreme Self, just as the Mandarachal Mountain was held up by the Supreme Lord, Vishnu, assuming the form of a huge tortoise. In other words, the effort should be to concentrate on the Supreme Self.

Kashmir is incomplete without Sharda Peeth, its face Kashmiri Pandits and Kashmiri Shaivism, and Amrit Manthan is urgently needed for the safety of the humanity.

The contribution of *'Foreword'* by Shri Girdhari Sharma I.A.S. (Retd.) in late 1950's, Sharma also worked on the Lok Sabha Sectt. Publication, "Atomic News Digest", a Monthly. He is a physicist by training, though later on he crossed over to the

State and then to the Indian Administrative service. After his retirement, he also obtained a Post Graduate degree in Philosophy. These days he is engaged in co-relating spiritual experiences mentioned in Hindu scriptures with the modern findings of Para-psychology. The *Foreword* has added glamour and meaning to *"Kashmir Shaivism : Under Siege"*.

The counseling given by Dr. B.R. Sharma (Retd.) Secretary Himachal Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages, presently the Project Coordinator on Himalayan Studies to Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (National Museum of Man) Bhopal (M.P.), more particularly in writing *'Epilogue'*, has enriched the book *"Kashmir Shaivism: Under Siege"*.

M.G. Chitkara is already a well-known author whose fast finger has turned out 50 or more volumes including encyclopaedias. In *"Kashmir Shaivism: Under Siege"* he has come out with another timely and well researched work, to the library of his congratulations, I dare add one more appreciation which he more than aptly deserves.

Bishamber Lal Sud

Foreword[1]

In Shaivism, the supreme reality is Shiva who works through His Shakti. Kashmir Shaivism has leaning toward Advaita Vedanta. When talking of Kashmir, one is reminded of its beauty and charm. Considering this physical aspect of Kashmir and divinity envisaged in Shaivism. One's mind irresistibly goes to the Guru Nanak's famous Bhajan or chant:

हे हरि सुन्दर, हे हरि सुन्दर!
वनों वनों में श्यामल, श्यामल,
गिरी गिरी में उन्नत उन्नत,
सरिता सरिता चंचल चंचल,
सागर सागर गम्भीर हे!
सेवक जनके सेवा–सेवा पर,
दुःखी जनों के वेदना–वेदन,
योगि जनों के आनन्द हे!
हे हरि सुन्दर, हे हरि सुन्दर!
तेरे चरणों पर सीर नमों!

Paramahansa Yogananda has translated the chant with Ananda (bliss) typical of a Yogi:

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1. Girdhari Sharma, IAS (Retd.) is a physicist by training. He has worked on "Atomic News Digest.", a Lok Sabha Secretariat Monthly before his selection to the Punjab Civil Services through competition. In due course he was promoted to the Indian Administrative Services. After retirement he also obtained a post graduate degree in philosophy. Now he is residing at 19-A/2, Sector 6, Parwanoo, (H.P.).

O God beautiful, O God beautiful!
In the forest Thou art green,
In the mountain Thou are high,
In the river Thou are restless,
In the ocean Thou art grave,
To the serviceful, thou art service,
To the lover, Thou art love,
To the sorrowful Thou art sympathy
To the Yogi Thou art bliss.
O God beautiful, O God beautiful
At Thy feet, O I do bow !

Truth is the same for all seers. Guru Nanak in poetic fervour calls Him Hari or Paramahansa. Yogananda translates Him as God. On going to the cascading streams or high snowy Himalayan peaks, the truth manifests as Kashmir Shaivism in the Valley, Shaivism is not only a popular religion, so to say, but Kashmiri Hindus from Raja (Prince) to Rank (Pauper) all revere it. A few years back Dr. Karan Singh son of erstwhile ruler Maharaja Hari Singh produced a telefilm "Dance of Shiva". All of us are aware that Dr. Karan Singh (M.P.) Rajya Sabha has been Rajpramukh of J&K and later an eminent Cabinet Minister in the Union Government.

The telefilm succinctly depicts all aspects of Shiva. He is the cosmic consciousness present in destruction and regeneration. While dance of Shiva is presented in Nataraja, the corresponding tumbling mountains booming thunders in the sky, engulfing waves of water are shown in awe inspiring scenes. The calm and quiet period of regeneration is also there.

The telefilm would be credit to any nuclear scientist trying to explain the famous matter-energy conversion equation $E=me^2$, through visual, through visual illustration.

Kashmir Shaivism does not stop on speculations only. Lakshman joo and Gopi Krishna are two recent examples who realised its fulfilment in recent years.

Gopi Krishna realised it when his Kundalini arose in an unexpected manner, through Pingla Nadi Gopi Krishna, as Assistant

Commissioner of J&K Government used to meditate by visualising a radiant lotus.

In 1937, his Kundalini energy rushed up his spinal cord and broke as a hall of light in his head. Thereafter his whole body remained afire for many years. Later he could and sublimate it through Sushumna Nadi and slowly he developed many miraculous power, one of which was writing of poetry in many languages which he even did not know.

He could be in contact with ultimate reality, which he describes:

"When I look within I am lifted beyond the confines of time and space, in tune with a majestic, all-conscious existence, which mocks at fear and laughs at death, compared to which seas and mountains, suns and planets, appear no more than flimsy rock riding across the blazing sky; an existence which is in all and yet absolutely removed from everything, an endless inexpressible wonder that can only be experienced and not described"[2].

Kundalini arousal is basic approach in Shaivism and no doubt this ultimate, Self-Realisation has survived all vicissitudes in Kashmiri history tells us that approaches to Religious consciousness have always been beset with obstacles not only inner but mundane as well. Serious followers of different faiths have at time been patronised but more often persecuted. The Kashmiri Pandits who in effect are Shaivas, are no exception.

A book depicting their trials and sufferings in Kashmiri through ethnic purge was overdue. "Kashmir Shaivism: Under Siege" arrives in time. M.G. Chitkara, by writing this book has used all his skill, which is now in his bone marrow as he is now a veteran author.

The task, which he set before him, required diverse kind of knowledge and deep study. Chitkara has worked on two

2. Gopi Krishna: The Awakening of Kundalini, D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Company Pvt. Ltd. Bombay (1975), p. ix.

parallel streams of Kashmir History. On spiritual side he has dwelled upon the development of various phases of Shaivism and saints and sages of the creed. On mundane side, he talks about the history of rulers and the ruled, the religions dissension and above all the persecution of Kashmiri Pandits. He has completed the task successfully and painstakingly. It is hoped the book will attract readers interested in Kashmiri History and the on going terrorism.

Now that terrorism has been taken cognizance of at global level, the Pandits can hope to return to their hearth and home. We can hope for the bright future of the Pandits. Chitkara's work will continue to serve as reminder brutality of man on man, particularly when a group consists of a misguided and also misguiding religious fanatics.

Girdhari Sharma
IAS (Retd.)

Prelude*

The Muslims of the subcontinent who remained in India after partition have made far greater progress than their brethren in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Very significantly, today, the wealthiest businessman, in the subcontinent is an Indian Muslim living in Bangalore. And the greatest scientist of India is Abul Kalam, who has been awarded the greatest civilian honour "*Bharat Ratna*", by Indian Government.

A conciliatory move by Pakistan would, surely engender positive outlook among its people. Their sense of national unity would then be based on motivations, which would no longer be anti-Indian, but rather pro- Pakistani. And such an attitude would pave way for "live and let live". Then Kashmiri Pandits may revert back to the valley with Kashmir Shaivism and Sufism in their bosom.

The Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee during his Independence Day speech delivered on August 15, 2001, while explaining Sufi ideology, said:

'The caste and land of you Kashmiris is the same. Do not unnecessarily let anything create a distance between you. If Muslim is milk, Hindu is sugar. Mix this milk with this sugar'. This Sufi ideology is the convergence point of Kashmiri with the spiritual tradition of India. Kashmiriyat is a fine example of *Sarva Dharma*

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Samabhava (secularism). It completely negates the Two-Nation theory. We are indeed proud of this Kashmiriyat.

The truth is that Kashmir epitomises the clash between Pakistan's Islamic and India's secular state. In that sense, it is the "core" problem, but an insoluble reality as such. The core truths is that the onetime soul of the Kashmiri people, "Kashmiriyat", is dead in our time. And it died at the hands of Kashmiris from Hari Singh's exclusion of Muslims in the Dogra Raj to Sheikh Abdulla's devious autocratic politics and who when out of power, found his best non-secular platform at the Hazratbal mosque in Srinagar.

The subsequent ethnic cleansing of about 200,000 Kashmiri Pandits, the most silent and forgotten cleansing in the 20th century, also killed Kashmiriyat.

The 'Kashmiriyat' of which we hear so much is dying an untimely death though it took hundreds of years to evolve. If we delve deep into the history of Kashmir we would realise how this beautiful valley was metamorphosed into a virtual paradise on earth by the saints and Sufis.

'Kashmiriyat', or Kashmiri ethos, is an amalgam of different strands that have been welded together by the sages of this splendid land. The interaction of Lal Ded or Lalla Yogeshwari, a popular Kashmiri Shaivite woman hailing from a Brahmin family of Pompor, with Mir Sayed Ali Handai, a prominent Sufi of early 14th century is believed to have laid the foundation for the inter-religious amity that has characterised Kashmiri ethos. This free mingling of Sufis and Yogis resulted in the cross-fertilization of different precepts giving birth to a unique spiritual movement referred to as the Rishi order in the annals of Kashmir. The founder of this movement was Sheikh Nuruddin Rishi (b. 1378). He was so much influenced by Lal Ded his poetic out-pouring seem so similar to Lal Ded's. His aim was to reach the unknowable in heart by lighting the lamp of love. Sheikh Nuruddin Rishi denounced mullas of his time as hypocrites who misinterpreted the verses of Quran in order to attain power and pelf, ignoring its message of peace, love and brotherhood. He was of the opinion that one cannot become a true Muslim unless and until he or she realised the ultimate reality of the self.

So strong was the impact of Shaivite philosophy on him and his disciples that they preferred to call themselves 'Rishis', an ancient and popular term for sages, rather than as Sufis. Sheikh Nuruddin Rishi was highly respected by the Kashmiri populace and his followers came from all sections of society. He was a spiritual beacon and a source of solace to both Hindus and Muslims.

The Rishis believed that service to mankind was the best form of worshipping God. They planted fruit trees for the benefit of the people. Sheikh Nuruddin's disciples believed that by serving the people without any distinction of caste, class or creed, the valley of Kashmir could be turned into virtual a paradise on earth, and they left no stone unturned to realise their dream. But they themselves lived hard, poverty-stricken, austere lives in the true tradition of yogis and Sufis. Jamal Ahmad, in an article "Kashmiriat: An Ethos in Peril", writes:

"The liberal and composite religious ambience created by the Rishis had a strong impact on the political classes of Kashmir. Sultan Zainul Abidin (1420-70) carried forward the noble task initiated by the Rishis. He rebuilt some of the temples destroyed by his bigoted predecessor Sikandar and welcomed back the Kashmiri Pandits who had left the valley to escape from the tyrannical regime of the mullas. They were re-appointed to the higher positions of administration. Jaziya was abolished. Taking inspiration from Sheikh Nuruddin's vegetarianism (the Rishi believed that though Shariat permitted meat eating it entailed cruelty to animals), Zainul Abidin prohibited cow-slaughter. The Sultan also took up on a war footing the public welfare measures started by the Rishis. A number of canals, tanks and dams were constructed peace and prosperity. In fact the Sultan tried his best to realise the rishis' ideal of turning the Kashmir valley into a paradise on earth, and grateful Kashmiris still cherish the memory of this enlightened king as the Badshah (the great king).

Hindus who had embraced Islam under duress were encouraged to return to their ancestral faith. To further strengthen the bonds between the two communities he got Sanskrit classics translated into Persian and vice versa. These measures greatly helped in the crystallization of the composite identity of Kashmiriyat

among the people cutting across sectarian barriers so much so that Jahangir the Mughal emperor (d. 1627) observed in his autobiography that Muslims in Kashmir practised many Hindu customs and intermarried with Hindus. Most of the Kashmiri Muslims till today follow the customary Hindu law of the Mitakshara school in the succession of paternal properties. Similarly a majority of the mosques and shrines of Muslim saints in Kashmir do not have domes, but spires in the style of Buddhist Viharas.

Today, the spirit of Kashmiriyat imbued with the lofty ideals of Lal Ded, the Rishis and the Badshah is being profaned at the hands of fanatics and terrorists. Kashmir would not survive if Kashmiriyat dies. The valley of Kashmir evokes strong emotions today. The paradise on earth has almost turned into hell".

Kashmir Shaivism when amalgamated with Islam speaking, has come as Sufism, which is apparently a mild religions way, known for its unusual tolerance. If Sufism were to prevail in Kashmir, all Hindus profess to live there and not leave their hearths & homes, It is, therefore, basically the extremists and intolerant aspects of Islam, which causes the problem.

The Kashmiri Pandits, as their past history bears out, have always been forward–looking, not past–ridden but with an awareness of their roots and a progressive outlook. They have had a glorious past–in terms of our cultural refinement and a sense of values–as well as a checkered history, marked by ups and downs. Though wronged and uprooted several times, they have somehow withstood onslaughts in spite of having shrunk to a small community of about a million Pandits and have maintained their cultural identity, blossomed out of Shaivism.

Abhinav Gupta, the disciple of Utpaldeva, developed Kashmir Shaivism in the valley. A stream at Ishbar, near Srinagar is known as Gupt Ganga, where a high centre of Shaivism came up under the guidance of Swami Lakshman Joo, a realized Tantric adept. There can be no doubt above the importance of the Kashmir Shaiva vision the ongoing stream of human spirituality.

The most significant contribution of Kashmir Pandits has been the exposition of Trikha philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism, which synthesizes the diverse currents of thought, and wisdom

found in all systems of ancient Indian philosophy. Earlier, Kashmiri Pandit scholars and savants had played a leading role in spreading Buddhism far and wide across the Himalayan frontiers of India in Central Asia, Tibet and China.

Similarly Kashmiri Pandits made notable contribution to human civilisation in the fields of mysticism, humanism, aesthetics, art and architecture, language and literature, astrology, science and historiography. In this context, mention may be made of the contributions of Abhinavgupta, Anandvarman, Kshemendra, Kallat, Mammat, Rudrat, Jagadar Bhatt, Avtar Bhatt, Kalhana, Jonaraja, Srivara, Lakshmanjoo etc. In short, Kashmiri Pandits acted as the vanguard of intellectual, cultural and spiritual movements, which lent a distinct identity to this ethno-religious minority of Kashmir.

For centuries, Kashmir Shaivism has been confined to the Valley. Now after their exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley because of Socio-Political compulsions, they are scattered. It is Lord Shiva's wish that "Kashmir Shaivism" should no longer remain exclusive with Kashmiri Pandits. It is Gods given opportunity to propound, preach, propagate that practice.

Shaivism everywhere "Kashmir Shaivism : Under Siege" is a classic work of Justice M.G. Chitkara–We heartily cougratulate him for his brilliant of timely endeavour. The work is likely to be appreciated by thinkers, philosophers and policy makers.

Contents

1

Introduction

Kashmir is known to be the most beautiful piece of land on the face of this earth, a miniature heaven designed by Nature for the earthly people. Kashmir is a Holy Land, the Ultima Thule of pilgrimage for the Hindu pilgrims. There is not a space even as large as a grain of sesamum without a tirtha, says Kalhana, the master historian of ancient India.

History reveals the vices, which cause nations and individuals to decline and fall, and the virtues, which lead them to power and prosperity. History is always continuous. There can be no fresh start. The real history of Kashmir begins probably five thousand years before Christ. It is said that Maryada Parshotam Sri Ram Chandra, the conqueror of Lanka, was the first king who established a kingdom in Kashmir.

The Rajtarangni opens with the name of the glorious king of Kashmir, Gonanda I, 'worshipped by the region which Kailasha lights up and which the tossing Ganga clothes with a soft garment' who came to the throne of Kashmir in about 3121 B.C.

The kings who ruled in those days were themselves either scholars or patrons of learning. They administered justice according to the dictates of Dharma (duty) enjoined by Shastras. They seldom had any lust for pillage. Their statesmanship won them homage from all. The Brahmins - Pandits were highly honoured.

Alberuni (1017-1030 A.D.) says that Banaras and Kashmir are the high schools of Hindu Science. It is Kashmir that produced the greatest historians, poets and philosophers. "The country once

enjoyed great fame as the seat of the original paradise of the human race and was in earliest time one of the principal seats of Indian culture". The Kashmiris of today descend from the mighty sages of the past who have left behind a rich legacy, not in the shape of jewels and palaces, but more valuable than them, in the shape of Books; the Venus: Books"[1]. Secularism emphasises the welfare of all, and not only of majority community alone. It cannot have one meaning in India and another in Kashmir. The Kashmiri Pandits too deserve the fruits of secularism. Secularism seeks maximum human happiness for all.

Happiness has remained central to every human being. Men have always made efforts to live happily and this desire acts as the driving force behind all progress of Mankind. Men blessed with wisdom and enterprise engage themselves in the task of achieving something higher, bigger and more productive for mankind. They excel in art, science and philosophy and their pursuit results in discoveries and inventions, which add to human welfare. Secularism is perhaps one of such discoveries, so that different people may live together in peace, harmony and attain happiness.

For achieving happiness for all, Social thinkers and reformers felt the need for power, which in turn could contain the power of wealth. It was concluded that power should be decentralised in a group of persons so that no single individual could attain undesirable importance and dominance. Hence the concept of 'state power' came into being. The goal of 'state power' was to provide equality, equal opportunity, justice and dignity to everyone, and not to a few chosen ones. And more so in a democratic set up.

Democracy, as we know it today, took a thousand years to evolve. Of course, it is not perfect. But it is the best form of government, guaranteeing the rule of law. The people make the law. But fundamentalism does not believe in democracy. It does not believe in dialogue, in discussion or in consent. It does not believe in representative government.

Fundamentalism in Jammu and Kashmir began with ethnic purge in the valley. The Pandits, among the original inhabitants

of the valley, were driven out. It is in progress. The Kashmiri Pandits are squeezed by the fundamentalists, putting to an end the secular democratic process. The fundamentalists have virtually turned the valley into a Talibanese experiment.

Pakistan has been the home of fundamentalism for half a century. It was born of the two-nation theory, which brought about the partition of India. Later it turned to terrorism. And yet Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, never envisaged a theocratic state. He wanted Hindus and Muslims to live together. But after his death (in fact, even before it) power passed into the hands of fundamentalists and the army. The fundamentalists were behind the hate-India campaigns, behind the wars of 1965 and 1971, and the Kargil misadventure.

Fundamentalism, Violence and Terrorism do not pay in the long run. The massacre of innocent citizens goes against the basic teachings of the Quran. What is regrettable is that the so-called custodians of the Islamic faith do not care to practise what the holy book preaches. They are obviously guided by their petty personal ambitions and pursue this in the name of Islam.

In the name of Islam, the terrorism that these so-called Jehadis have perpetrated is bringing nothing but disgrace to Islam. To call such killers as "freedom fighters" only shows the degradation of mind. To kill innocent children and disfigure young girls is sheer lunacy. Islam means submission to god, its root is *salam*, which means peace.

Jehad means struggle against oneself to overcome evil and also in the cause of Islam. It makes no reference to warring. The great Imam Ghazali, who is hailed as the "Rejuvenator of Islam", had written tomes against terrorism, when it had erupted for a short time in his lifetime under the leadership of the notorious Hasan Bin-Sabbah, whose bands of assassins had put to death a number of prominent Muslims. Ghazali was so horrified at the upsurge of such heinous crimes that he warned the Muslims that if they did not destroy terrorism, terrorism would destroy Islam. As a result of murderous activities carried on by the militant Muslims, who proclaim themselves as Mujahids, the greatest damage is being done to the image of Islam[2].

Terrorism is a double-edged weapon. In the long run, it devours the promoters themselves. The choice before the Pakistani dictator is very limited. He is caught in his own trap and this will make it impossible for him to continue his proxy war against India without destroying himself. He should read the writings on the wall and resist the temptation of continuing with cross-border terrorism. For all practical purposes, foreign mercenaries under the patronage of the Pakistani army and the ISI are controlling the cross-border terrorism. It may be a matter of time before these rootless mercenaries pounce upon their sponsors.

The situation in Kashmir surely does pose big challenge to the world and more particularly to India. There is no halfway between terrorism and peace. The forces of militancy have to be crushed ruthlessly and decisively. This onerous responsibility will have to be discharged by the Centre and the state governments without causing any harassment to civilians. The Indian armed forces are leaving nothing to chance. Still, there are snags and loopholes, which need to be corrected speedily so that the operational efficiency of our Army officers and jawans is not compromised.

The time has come to stamp out this scourge of fundamentalism. And it is here that the world will expect Washington to take a firm stand against the forces of fundamentalism. To destroy Osama bin Laden will only be a symbolic step.

Cross-border terrorism is real and it is an attack not only on civilians but on secularism. 'Secular' really means 'of this world'. In the language of the Bible the practical meaning of 'secularism' is: "Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's, and unto God what is God's". That is, the State and religion are different things. In Bharat the institution of the Sate has always been secular. According to Dr. Ambedkar, "It (secular state) does not mean that we shall not take into consideration the religious sentiments of the people. All that a Secular State means is that this Parliament shall not be competent to impose a particular religion upon the rest of the people. That is the only limitation that the Constitution recognises. Secularism does not mean abolition of religion".

Pakistan was created in the name of Islam. It became a State, but not a Nation. The day Dacca raised its voice against West Pakistan, the hollowness of a mode of worship as the basis of the Nation concept was falsified.

Bangladesh too has declared Islam as the State religion. There also the nation is not based on religion. Had it been so, even if we leave aside the 15 per cent Hindus, why could the Bihari Muslims who migrated there in 1947 in the name of Islam have not become integrated with the national mainstream to this day? Why have local Muslims not yet accepted the Muslims (Mujahids) who migrated to West Pakistan from Bharat in 1947 in the name of Islam are not yet? Ahmedias and Shias are Muslims to, then why do the Pakistanis not accept them? The Muslims of different regions want to break away from Pakistan and set up their own States. The Islamic Pakistan is not accommodative to different sects.

Rather, the Hindus say, "*Naiko Munih yasya vachah pramaanam*" - 'there is not single sage whose words are the ultimate truth'. Hindus have many sects and they have the capacity to add new ones. Gandhiji said Hinduism has enough space to accommodate Jesus, Mohammed, Zoroaster and Moses[3]. Nature his taught diversity to Hindus.

India is a country of the greatest diversity in the world. And it has stake in secularism. That is why fundamentalism is anathema to us. It is believed that fundamentalism will completely destroy the cohesion of the Indian polity. We are aware that there are fundamentalists in this country. That they are illiterate will be no excuse. They will be hunted down finally. But it is not enough to deal with the local ones. We must try to destroy the foreign sources.

The point to realise is that Pakistan has reached a dead end. Pakistan was created by the British Parliament's Indian Independence Act of 18 July 1947. That Act provided that Jammu and Kashmir like other native states would become sovereign states after the lapse of British paramountcy on 15 August 1947. Jinnah or his Muslim League did not challenge this provision when Pakistan emerged as an independent state.

Pakistan came into existence in fulfilment of the Indian Independence Act of 1947. It is in terms of the same Act that Maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession and India's Governor General Lord Mountbatten accepted that accession on 27 October 1947. The colonels and clerics of Pakistan by way of fulfilling the jihadi spirit, which they have created, are challenging this constitutional arrangement.

So if Kashmir is a problem it has been created jointly by the mullahs and the military of Pakistan sustaining belligerency for the last more than two decades. The politics of Pakistan, now under a military dictatorship, is identical with the politics of the Mujahideen, guerrilla fighters organised by the Islamic fundamentalists.

The road it has travelled for the past five decades is blocked. There are major obstacles to changing course the main being the vested interest of the military hierarchy and their frontline, the Islamic fundamentalists and the "jehadi" warriors.

Jehad can never solve Indo-Pak relations. Need is that every Indian and Pakistani, man and woman, take courage placing full reliance on God and reject the evil, openly unequivocally, and call for friendship, co-operation and amicable solution of all pending Indo-Pakistan problems. It is being said that the military junta is by no means a unified lot. In five decades of its existence, Pakistan has for the most part been under military rule, with three dictators ruling the roost. And three wars with India have been their major output, but all proving to be gross failures.

"It appears that Pakistan and the terrorist outfits aided and abetted by her are encouraged by their success in driving out the entire Hindu population from the valley. It is time that everyone, belonging to any party or ideology makes it unequivocally clear to our neighbours and her minions in our country that no further division of our country will be tolerated; that 2001 is not 1947. Any price howsoever great and any sacrifice howsoever excruciating to preserve the unity and integrity of our beloved country, shall be our choice".

–Mohan Bhagwat

The Government, both at the Centre and in the State has to put down the insurgent terrorism with a heavy hand to give succour to the people of Kashmir. India has a big role to play in ensuring such fructification. This is the moment of history, which cannot be allowed to be frittered away.

Kashmiri Pandits were 'God's chosen few' who needed to throw off the mantle of apathy and 'build a community of mutual help since tomorrow belongs to Kashmiris'. Moral and spiritual values of Vedanta would be the hallmark of the New World order of the 21st century in which Kashmiris would play a significant role. This role could be moulded on what Lalleshwari described as *'Samooya Rozun'* i.e. 'living in the present moment uncluttered by the past conditioning, as living in the dynamic awareness of reality as it confronts us from moment to moment, as living a life of honesty, integrity, compassion, truth, non-violence, peace, dharma and love, as living more for others than for oneself, as serving the poor, the needy, the less fortunate'.

The future awaits Kashmiri Pandits. It his in going back to Kashmir as the true inheritors of the Promised Land, with a long-term strategy and vision. The hope of a small surviving and once uprooted Brahmin community is the tolerant Sufi or Rishi cult among Kashmiri Muslims and projection of a deep rooted Advaita religious philosophy of Shaivism evolved by learned Kashmiri Brahmins.

The Supreme Reality is Shiva. His infinite love reveals itself in the five divine acts of creation, preservation and dissolution of the Universe, and the obscuration and liberation of the souls. Shiva acts through His shakti. While Shiva is the efficient cause of the creation, Shakti is the instrumental cause and Maya is the material cause. The universe, which undergoes evolution for the benefit of souls, is real and eternal. It is His manifestation only, and is not apart from Him in the essence[4].

Self-realisation comes to the Jiva in four stages and through a prescribed Sadhana. Sadhana involved charya (service) and Kriya (devotion and worship), and Yoga (meditation). These three are like the flower-bud, the flower and the fruit-bud. The culmination is of Jnana, which is like the fruit. This fruition does not take place,

without the help of the Guru and more than anything else without the Grace of the Lord.

CONCLUSION

Kashmiri Pandits generally mean Hindus of Kashmir because the other casts are only nominal there. All Pak regimes have been raising the issue of Kashmir. It is not that they are interested in Kashmiri Muslims but because the very seat of power cannot be kept secure without diverting public attention from the main problems of that country. This attitude becomes more urgent for military dictatorship as it is always without grass-root support. In his recent visit to India General Parvez Musharraf candidly admitted that without Kashmir issue being discussed he could not continue to occupy the chair of the President. Without terrorism in Kashmir the rulers of Pakistan cannot furnish proof of their sincerity, to their public where religious sentiments have now been exploited for over half a century. Driving out the Kashmiri Pandits is thus obvious.

In its pure form Shaivism is simply uniting the individual soul with cosmic consciousness. Such spiritual achievements are possible in peaceful times only. But testing takes place in turbulant times.

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2

Diadem of Himalayas

The term Himalaya comes from Sanskrit words: *hima*, meaning "snow", and *alaya*, meaning "home" - the home of snow. The Himalayas are not merely the home of snow, but they have also been a stronghold of Yogic wisdom and spirituality for millions of people, regardless of their religious beliefs. This ancient and rich tradition still exists today as these unique mountains continue to whisper their spiritual glory to all who have an ear to hear.

When one sits in the morning and evening on the tops of the mountains, he can see understand how this beauty is an inseparable aspect of the Lord, whose attributes are *Satyam, Shivam*, and *Sundaram*–truth, eternity, and beauty. This is the land of devas.

In the Himalayas, dawn (*usha*) and twilight (*sandhya* - when the day weds the night) are not mere moments created by the rotation of the earth, but have a deep symbolic meaning. Morning, afternoon, evening, and night each have their own beauty which no language can ever describe. Many times a day the mountains change their colours, because the sun is at the service of these mountains. In the morning they are silvery, at noon they are golden, and in the evening they look red. Their beauty is splendid and beyond description.

The morning environment in the Himalayas is so calm and serene that it leads an aspirant spontaneously to silence. That is why the people of the Himalayas become Meditators. Nature

strengthened the schools of meditation. In the cave, Usha (dawn), holding the rising sun in her palm, would awaken the Rishi every morning. The rays of the sun stole gently through the entrance.

In the evening when the weather clears and the sun breaks through the clouds, it seems as though the mighty Painter were pouring out millions of colours on the snowy peaks, creating paintings which could never be duplicated by the brushes and colours of the tiny fingers of artists. Any art that exists in Tibet, China, India and Persia has influence of the Himalayan beauty on it.

Beauty remains bound within the limitations of human realms if it is not appreciated heartily. When one becomes aware of the higher level of beauty, which projects itself though nature, he becomes a true artist. When an artist becomes aware of that fountain from which arises all beauty, then instead of painting, he starts composing poems. The brush and colours do not have access to that finest level of consciousness. Spiritual beauty needs to be expressed on increasingly deeper and more subtle levels.

The most ancient travelers of the Himalayas are the clouds which roll gently from the Bay of Bengal. Rising from the ocean, these monsoon clouds travel toward the snowy peaks of the Himalayas, hug them, and return roaring to the plains, laden with pure snowy waters. They shower their blessings and bestow them upon the soil of India.

Kalidasa, a great Sanskrit poet known as "the Shakespeare of the East", composed many poems about these clouds. Meghadoota is a solitary example of an excellent collection of these poems. In these poems Kalidasa used the clouds as messengers to deliver his message. Famous Indian epics, are full of praises describing pilgrimages to the Himalayas. Even modern poets of Hindi Urdu like Prasad and Iqbal (a Kashmiri Sapru Brahmin) could not resist composing poems on the Himalayan beauty. Many Sanskrit poems, such as Mahimna -stotra, are sung as though a traveler were going up and coming down from the Himalayas.

The classical music of India borrowed ragas like Pahari from the melodious tunes sung by the girls from the tops of the

mountains. The Himalayas remain replete with mysteries for poets, artists, musicians, and travelers, but they reveal their most important message only to those who are receptive. Mystics alone can unveil the real secrets of these wondrous mountain[1]. The Himalaya, famed as the king of mountains, perhaps, refers to the complete system of parallel ranges to tertiary mountains.

These mountain ranges have been responsible for regular monsoon and consequently the rainfall in the Indo-Gangetic belt. The Himalayas are the source for perennial rivers; the Gangas, Yamuna and Brahmaputra as also several other tributaries, which have joined these main rivers. For thousands of years nature has displayed its splendour through the trees, grassy lands, lush green, pastures, innumerable springs and beautiful flowers.

Despite its geographical isolation, Kashmir has, from ancient times, been a melting pot of the different cultures. Its magnificent woods, enchanting lakes, rivers, meadows glorious snow-clad mountains and above all fertile valleys attracted the foreigners to come and settle over here.

Kashmir carries with it a host of myths, legends, customs and traditions which throw ample light on the achievements and on unified culture of the people carried over from ancient times. Myths are beneficial in their own way and they are embodied in the later works as well, as a result of which their value is enhanced.

No doubt the mythical stories also carry a melody of legends and superstitious accounts which appear exaggerated but still some accounts are based on reliable sources or contemporary events which tell us about the historical background of man, his environment, his costumes and economy. Tradition says that Kashmir was once a lake hundreds of feet deep. It was occupied by a demon called Jalodbhava (water-born) till Vishnu assumed the form of a boar (Varaha), killed the demon and struck the mountain at Baramulla (ancient Varahamulla), boring an opening in it for the river water to flow through. The water of the lake rushed out and the valley was freed of the demon. This is further corroborated by other references recorded in the literary works. The earliest surviving Sanskrit literature of the valley is Nilamata Purana wherein it is said that the valley was formed out of water,

when the lake was drained off by Ananta, at the behest of Vishnu, through an outlet at baramulla. The chief of the Nagas, the author of the Purana and the son of sage Kashyapa, took care of the land and named it after his father. The Nagas were not friendly with Pishachas, the other group of people residing in the valley, but in course of time they gained their goodwill[2]. Supporting this assertion, the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang, writes that the vale of Kashmir was formerly a Naga lake.

Fifty years after the Nirvana of Buddha, Ananda's disciple Madhyantika came over to Kashmir and converted the dragon king of the lake to Buddhism. The king then founded 500 Sangharamas and invited sages and saints from outside the valley to come and settle here. They were to receive religious offerings from Nagas–the people of the land[3]. Kalhana, the author of *Rajatarangini*, says that Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva assisted Prajapati Kashyapa in killing the demon of the lake, Jalodbhava. After his death, the lake water was drained off and the land came to be known as Kashmir after Kashyapa[4].

The Buddha called Kashmir "the land of blue forests". He is said to have predicted that a disciple of Anand, his constant companion, would propagate his religion in Kashmir. Later, Kashmir became a great centre of Buddhism and Buddhist learning. Several Buddhist scholars lived and studied there. The third Buddhist Council was held in Kashmir. A number of Buddhist scholars from Kashmir went beyond the borders of India, especially to China, to spread the sacred message of the Buddha.

Most of the people in Ladakh, one of the divisions of Jammu and Kashmir State, are Buddhists. There are a number of Buddhist monasteries and priests there. Millions the world over follow Buddhism even today and draw inspiration from his life and work[5].

Another writer, Mulla Abdal Nabi Kashmiri, gives the story with an Islamic touch by associating it with the deluge of Noah. He says that when the deluge took place the whole world including Kashmir was under water. At that time the valley was known as 'Sati Sar' meaning thereby that the large lake was named after the Goddess 'Sati'. About the deluge, he continues, that when the

throne of Solomon landed at the hill of Shankaracharya, named since then as Takht-I-Sulaiman, only the summit of the hill was visible. The people roamed in boats and used to reside on the top of the hill. In this connection reference has been made to the moorings of the boats on the summit and in a sheer flight of imagination, existence of iron rings has also been referred to. Solomon after having taken his seat on the summit of the hill ordered two jins Kashf and Mir to have the water of the lake drained out. They obeyed his orders and made the water of the lake to flow out through a pass at Khadanyar below Baramulla.

In due recognition of their services, the waterless land so formed was named after them as Kashfmir or Kashmir. Altering the details and combining the local mythological story with Solomon's Islamic legend seem sheer fantasy, lacking historical basis[6].

There are other important sources of information regarding the lake, sacred places, early historical geography of the place, pilgrimage routes and topographical details, which too are also of inestimable value. Jayadratha in his informative work gives a detailed account of the shrines and the legends mostly associated with Shiva and his forms.

This is especially true in the Himalayas. Many varieties of flowers are found in abundance in these mountains. Those with a poetic imagination say that viewed from the snow-covered mountain peaks, these slopes laden with flower beds look like a magnificent vase of flowers which a fully prepared disciple would reverently present to his Gurudev.

Among all the flowers grown in the Himalayan valleys, the most beautiful are the lilies and the orchids. Hundreds of varieties of lilies bloom after winter is over and sometimes even before snowfall. There is one variety of lily which is pink and very beautiful[7].

It is the Himalayas where the ancient sages of India discovered some of the deepest secrets of life, which are enshrined in the holiest of Hindus texts. The fact is that Kashmir has been the cradle of Sanskrit learning for over two thousand years and

the repository of some of the seminal ideas and concepts that have set into motion thinking processes throughout the country and have shaped the Indian mind. Scholars from different parts of India would come all the way to Kashmir for intellectual exchange, and Kashmir too on its part absorbed and assimilated influences in art, literature, philosophy, religion and other areas from different sources in India. Kashmiris drew liberally from the pan-Indian pool of motifs, myths, legends and images, and at the same time greatly enriched Indian history and culture, art and aesthetics, philosophical thought and folklore quite out of proportion to their numbers.

Historically and culturally too Kashmir has always been a part of India, as pointed out by Hermann Goetz. Rajatarangini begins its account with the story of Queen Yashomati who was put on Kashmir's throne by none else than Krishna himself. And Ashoka who made Kashmir a part of his Mauryan Empire founded Srinagar, the capital city. Matrigupta was made a king of Kashmir on the recommendation of King Vikramaditya of Ujjain. There are many scholars, including Hindi dramatist Mohan Rakesh, who believe that Matrigupta and Kalidas were one and the same person[8].

A perusal of "Ritu Samhar" by Kalidas[9] will convince any reasonable person interested in study of literature and poetry that the poem was written in Kashmir. "Ritu Samhar" depicts romanticism of various seasons. Kalidas virtually depicts, Kashmir of Year around by its changing seasons and its natural beauty.

Kalidasa is acknowledged as the greatest poet and dramatist of Sanskrit literature. When the English translation of his drama Abhijnan Shakuntalam appeared in Europe, it created a sensation of sorts among the intellectuals. From Sir William Jones's English translation, the Shakuntalam appeared in German, French, Danish and Italian[10].

The best poet and dramatist of Sanskrit, Kalidas had been contemporary of king Vikramaditya. Some scholars consider him as belonging to a period a few years earlier to Christ whereas a few others regard him as belonging to the Gupta period. According to a traditional-story, Kalidas was made to marry a learned princess who had insulted him with the taunt of 'a fool'. Sting of the insult

gave rise to a determination. Kalidas engaged himself in the difficult pursuit of Saraswati (The goddess of knowledge). His efforts did not cease till he earned distinct merit in of Poetry and Drama. His four works on poetry (Raghuvamsa, Kumara Sambhava, Meghaduta and Rtusamhara) and three on drama (Adhijnana Shakuntalam, Vikramorvasiyam and Malavikagnimitram) are famous. On reading Abhijnana Sakuntalam the well-known German Poet Goethe got overwhelmed by emotion. Kalidas has given in his works a full of flavour (well steeped in sentiments) expression to Indian culture. Besides, in them, love has been presented in its pretty graceful, sublime and excellently skilful forms. In the use of the embellishment of Simile in poetry Kalidas is without a match[11].

The celebrated land of Kashmir situated as a diamond in the crown of the Himalayas excels the beauty par excellence. Its beautiful greenery, hills, meadows, lakes, gardens, small streams along with other components of nature work as ornaments to add to its wealth of beauty.

The name Kashmir at once brings to the mind the vision of a picturesque valley nestled deep in the Himalayas. Standing majestically in its mountain isolation, Kashmir has been the crucible for refining human thought, be it the Vaishnav cult, Shaivism, Buddhism or Sufism. While emphasizing the essential unity of the ultimate reality, Kashmir has also recognised the existence of various paths to reach the absolute truth.

The Mahayana cult of Buddhism that found its birth in the Kashmir valley was a logical sequence to the search for the ultimate unity. Kashmir with its hoary past and bewitching beauty, philosophical intellectualism and mystic spiritualism is a paradise on earth. It has a rich collection of historical, literary and travels records which are interesting in their own right. The Kashmir valley presents an unparalleled climatic and physiographic complexity and extremes.

Nature is very peaceful. She disturbs only those who disturbs themselves, but she teaches wisdom to those who admire and appreciate her beauty. The diadem of Himalayas, the Kashmir, had been trampled under feet by the terrorist and the fundamentalists. They have practically sieged its beauty, the Shaivism.

CONCLUSION

Kashmir is the crown jewel of the Himalayas. Its mundane beauty has charmed saints, sages kings and poets alike. However this beauty has also served as a stepping stone to the bliss of Self-realisation along various paths. So Kashmir Shaivism is the supreme. However the Kashmiri Pandits the main votaries of Shaivism have been the main targets of terrorism and they had to flee from their home and hearth. In other words the Shaivism is now under siege.

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3

Valley, The Rishivae

The Kashmir Valley, long known as the Rishivae or Garden of Rishis, had a turbulent history of internal strife and foreign invasion, it has also borne holy men and women who preached a humane belief in the uniform treatment of people belonging to different faiths, and a conviction that there was a single God beyond sectarian divisions. True mystics as they were, their sayings, mostly in verse, emphasise ecumenical thinking.

It was in the Valley that Muslim ascetics established the Rishi order, notwithstanding the fact that the concept of a Rishi is alien to Islam. On the other hand, Hindu saints did not shy away from associating with Muslim sages. The common goal of both was the realisation of the Self.

All religions revolve around the realisation of the cosmic Self by the individual self, and the means by which this realisation is to be achieved. In the phraseology of the Vedanta, the quest for Self-realisation entails a journey beset with hardships and hurdles that the jivatman, or the individual soul, must undergo in order to merge in the Parmatman or the Absolute Soul.

The Vedanta teaches that the seeker of truth or Brahman must possess six qualities: *Sama*, a calm mind that does not wander; *Dama*, control of the senses, celibacy or continence; *uparati*, self-denial and concentration of mind; *titiksha*, the regulation of the ego through the practice of forbearance and forgiveness; *shraddha*, an unbiased or receptive mind with an earnest regard for the Vedic learning; *samadhana*, the practice of undisturbed

mediation. One of the time-honoured ways of subjecting oneself to such discipline and cultivating the virtues of self-restraint is by setting out on a teerthayatra or pilgrimage.

The concept of a pilgrimage is central to all the major faiths of the world: Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem, Amarnath, Vaishnodevi and Sabarimalai are only a few of the destinations to which pilgrims dedicate themselves across the globe. The teerthayatra offers the jivatman a chance to discipline itself and find out if it has reached the stage where it can live without the help of carnal pleasures. It enables the jivatman to renounce worldly comforts and live like a hermit. This was perhaps the purpose behind the establishment of the teertha sthanas in mountainous and other difficult terrain, where the pilgrim could not surround himself with the amenities and luxuries that we take for granted in normal life[1].

It is one of the sad results of scientific as well as philosophic research, that we become deeply aware of the transient nature of the multitude of forms, which constitute a universe. We are forced to meditate upon the fact of mortality and are sometimes appalled by the idea of the futility of all human endeavours. Hence the existence of every religion.

One such religious saint was Lal Ded. Born to a Brahmin family in the region of Pampore near Srinagar, this 14th century saint was drawn towards spirituality from a very young age. She did not believe in idol worship, sacrifices and the other rituals her clan indulged in, nor did she discriminate between a Hindu and a Muslim or the rich and the poor.

In one of her sayings - called Vaakh - she says: "Shiva is everywhere, do not discriminate between Hindus and Muslims (He is present in both). If you are intelligent, realise yourself: that will introduce you to God".

All humans were equal for her, irrespective of caste, creed, social status and belief. Spiritual awakening brought about by the knowledge imparted to her by her guru Siddha Shrikanth had freed her of all bonds and she had lost the sense that she was living in society.

Since her guru taught her the ultimate Truth, she sings, she began to wander around clad in nothing because clothes had lost their importance, as self-realisation became her sole objective in life.

"I gave up lying and deceiving and taught myself to see the Absolute in everyone", she says, "Now I accept food from whoever offers it to me (be that person a Hindu or a Muslim or belonging to any other religion)".

There are some anecdotes popular in Kashmir about Lal Ded's Association with Sayyid Ali Hamadani and Sheikh Noorudin Noorani (Nund rishi, the founder of the Rishi order). While it has not been proved that she met the former, there is hardly any doubt expressed by scholars about her association with Nund Rishi.

It is said that when Nund rishi was born, he refused to suckle his mother. Lal Ded on hearing this, went to his house and said to the infant: "If you were not ashamed of coming into the world, why do you fight shy of drinking your mother's milk"? Nund rishi, on hearing her words, started sucking his mother's breast.

Lal Ded did not approve of this dietary preference and upbraided a Brahmin who was taking a sheep to the butcher's: "This animal hides your shame and gives you warmth, it eats grass and drinks water. Should you make a meal of it"?

Lal Ded was an ascetic of a very high order, a yogini, a majnuni aqila (madwoman in love of God), a Rabia Sania (a second Rabia). Her sayings will never date.

She is as relevant today as she is as was 600 years ago. It makes one weep that some among the people who call her Lal Moj (Mother Lal) - people who constantly have her vaakh on their lips - have lost respect for her memory. They have forgotten the spiritual and ecumenical legacy bequeathed to them by their saints, and plunged the Valley into bloodbath.

Kashmir, the land of Sufis and saints, has also produced eminent scholars. Their work was recognised by western scholars, but, unfortunately, it remained unrecognised in their own homeland.

When no attention was paid to the work of Kashmiri scholars by the authorities concerned, they began to interact with western scholars and this association lasted for 65 years (1875 to 1940).

In 1889, Kashmiri scholars' work came into the limelight when Dr. Mark Aurel Stein required help for translating Rajtarangani into Sanskrit by using the Devanagri script. Rajtarangani was written in the Sharda script of the 11th century[2].

Sharda is the real identity of Kashmir. The valley was called Shardha Peetha for many centuries. Those who talk about Kashmir and Kashmiriat forget that in practice they are following an alien culture, which has nothing to do with Kashmir, Kashmiri language and Kashmiriat[3]. Pt. Govind Koul and Pt. Mukand Ram Shastri were identified for this work. With the help of these two prominent scholars, the translated version of Rajtarangani was edited and published in 1892 from Bombay. During this period, Dr. Mark Aurel Stein came in contact with other Kashmiri Brahmin scholars also.

George Grierson was impressed by the high philosophical content and linguist richness of Lalla Vaakh (Lal Ded or Lalla Yogeshwari was a popular 14th century Kashmiri saint poetess). Vaakh travelled from one generation to another by word of mouth. No manuscript was available. In 1914, Grierson assigned Pt. Mukand Ram Shastri the task of noting down the entire Lalla Vaakh. Pt. Mukand Ram located a saint, Dharam Dass Darvesh of Gucchgam, who had learnt Lalla Vaakh by heart. Pt Mukand Ram Shastri recorded the Vaakh from Darvesh and handed it over to Grierson.

When Sir Richard Carnac Temple, a British Indologist, edited the sayings of Lal Ded, he traced Pt. Mukand Ram's genealogy as well and described him thus. "Pt. Mukand Ram Shastri was a living pupil in the line of descendent of the founder of the Kashmiri Shaivism Acharya Abhanav Gupta[4].

The home of Kashmir Shaivism is the valley of Kashmir, India, a region of breathtaking beauty. One hundred miles long and 75 miles wide at its broadest, and 5,500 feet above sea level, majestic mountains surround the valley. This terrain isolates

Kashmir from the tropical Indian subcontinent, providing it with a mild and temperate climate. Since ancient times the Kashmir Valley has offered royalty and the wealthy a refuge from the oppressive heat of Indian springs and summers. It has been a heaven to philosophers and the spiritually minded people[5].

Swami Lakshman Joo a great scholar saint's home was nestled against the mountain range at the southeast corner of the valley Johen Hughes in his book "Self Realisation in Kashmir Shaivism", writes:

Although his home was referred to as the ashram and had that pure and uplifting atmosphere common to holy places, it was actually his private residence. His home echoed the physical splendor of Kashmir. From his garden one could behold the panorama of the valley the enchanting Dal Lake, and the edge of deep wilderness. In harmony with this natural beauty was Swamiji's careful touch upon the terrain.

CONCLUSION

Kashmir Shaivism is the most prominent system of the Tantric tradition, it is central philosophy of Tantrism. The contribution of Tantra to Indian philosophy and culture is of immense significance. Moreover, the Tantras, have something significant and relevant to say to modern humanity. With its positive attitude towards the world and its variety of Yogic sadhanas for self-improvement in all respects, Tantra carries a promise of help to people in their present predicament. However, the present predicament of the uprooted Kashmiri Pandits is as how to keep Rishivae alive in the valley in content and spirit.

Kashmir is aptly known as Garden of Rishis. Its beauty is unsurpassed, a fact well known throughout the world. It is not only tourists' paradise but is also a place of pilgrimage, throbbing with spirituality.

Lal Ded was a great woman saint of 14th Century. She was a woman mad in love of God. In other words, she was a fully self-realised saint. Like all exalted saints of such dizzy spiritual stature, she did not believe in caste, creed or ritualistic aspects of religions.

Her Vaakh, is the collection of her sayings and contains spiritual nuggets suited to all time and clime.

Kashmir Shaivism is also known for its Tantrism, which is the approach to God-realisation through merger of Shakti with Shiva. Ramakrishna Paramahansa used Tantra to realise God but his main approach was reaching Him through the Divine Mother aspect. The Kashmiri Pandits are keeping their spiritual tradition alive despite adverse circumstances prevailing in the valley and their exodus.

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4

Kashmir Shaivism

In Shaivism we begin with the central way, the way of *madhyama vak*. Kashmir Shaivism explains that yoga in action means that when you are seated in a bus, or when you are walking on the road, you must observe silence. Walk silently, sit in the bus silently.

Silence is beautiful only if it is rooted in awareness; if it is not rooted in awareness, then it is utterly empty. With awareness silence has a depth, a plenitude, a fulfillment, contentment, an overflowing joy. With awareness silence blooms, releases great fragrance. Silence can be of a bird on the wing, or it can be that of a corpse. Both are silences, but diametrically opposite. The silence of a corpse has to be avoided; the silence of a flower has to be imbibed. It is very difficult to be overflowing with life.

Silence is the proclamation of the absolute[1].

Shiva, the God of beneficence and compassion the renovator, guardian and father of the universe is worshipped and revered, propitiated and prayed to for mercy. Shiva, the destroyer God of the Hindu trinity (Brahma, Creator; Vishnu, protector; Shiva, destroyer)–he who adorns himself with the cloak of an elephant bestial primitive traits which his grace destroys and makes powerless and harmless–he who is impervious to temptation and is in perfect balance always - is implored, beseeched and prayed to for the self-control and even-minded-ness which destroys desire-the root cause of delusion[2].

While busy in worldly activities, continue your practice of contemplating silently on Lord Shiva. In the beginning you have to start with silence. Silence is the space in which one awakens, and the noisy mind is the space in which one remains asleep.

If your mind continues chattering, you are asleep. Sitting silently, if the mind disappears and you can hear the chattering birds and no mind inside, a silence ... this whistle of the bird, the chirping, and no mind functioning in your head, utter silence... then awareness wells up in you.

You can fall into a deep sleep, so deep that there are no longer even dreams - the mind has disappeared. In deep sleep there is no desire, there is no mind, no thought. But this is no samadhi. Many people go into such a coma, and they think they are in samadhi.

Awareness does not come from the outside, it arises in you, it grows in you. Otherwise remember: you are asleep.

The spring comes and the grass grows by itself. Sit silently, doing nothing, and wait for the spring. It comes, it always comes, and when it comes, the grass grows by itself. You will see great joy arising in you for no reason at all. Then share it, then give it to people! Your charity will be inner. Then it will not be just a means to attain to some goal; then it will have intrinsic value. And once you have become a meditator living the ordinary world, but living in such a way that you are not possessed by it; remaining transcendental, remaining in the world and yet above it.

This yoga in action is tremendously powerful. For example, if you were to continue your practice of contemplation while walking the fruit will be the same as the fruit you would acquire if you were to continuously practice contemplation in your meditation room. This is because yoga in action makes your practice of contemplation more solid, more substantial. This is why Kashmir Shaivism puts stress on yoga in action.

Yoga is a system of physical, mental and spiritual disciplines[3]. Yoga leads to the beauty of body and mind. Yoga tones up the body, widens the mental horizon and adds charm to personality. It helps in the over all development personality. It is panacea for

all ills of the life. Beside all this, Yoga leads to salvation[4]. Kashmir Shaivism does not recognise that Yoga which is inactive.

In the practice of yoga in action in *madhyama vak* you begin with silence. And when you rise from *madhyama* you will rise in the *para* state of Shiva. Kashmir Shaivism, therefore, is a universal system, pure, real, and substantial in every respect, which can be practiced by all, and at ease.

Kashmir Shaivism is known as the Pure Trika System. The Trika philosophy is meant for any human being without any restriction of caste, creed, or color. It is based on casteless society. Its purpose is to enable you to rise from individuality to universality. In trika thought there are three energies, para (supreme), apara (lowest), and parapara (combination of the lowest and the highest). These three primary energies represent the three fold activities of the world. It is admitted that this whole universe and every action in it, whether spiritual, physical, or worldly, is existing in these three energies.

The Trika system is comprised of four systems:

The Pratyabhijna system;
The Kula system;
The Krama system; and
The Spanda system.

Pratyabhijna System

The word pratyabhijna means, "to recognize, to realise your Self spontaneously once again". Here you have only to realise, you do not have to practice. There are no upayas, (means) in the Pratyabhijna system. You must simply recognize who you are.

Wherever you are, whether you are at the level of Supreme Being, at the level of Yoga, or at that level which is disgusting, you can recognise your own nature there and then without moving anywhere or doing anything[5].

The Pratyabhijna System was flourishing in the beginning of Kali Yuga. As time passed, however, it became veiled due to misunderstanding. It was not until the end of the eighth century

A.D. that the great Master Somananda reintroduced the pratyabhijna System in Kashmir. Somananda's disciple was Utpaladeva, and his disciple was Lakshmanagupta, and his disciple was Utpaladeva, and his disciple was the very great Abhinavagupta

Abhinavagupta authored a voluminous work entitled tantraloka (literally "the light of Tantra") in which he systematized the philosophy and religion of Tantra in a cogent and coherent way. The Tantraloka is the most rational and logical presentation of the Tantric position in existence.

Abhinavagupta is the principal philosopher of the Trika or Pratyabhijna school, popularly known as Kashmir Shaivism. Kashmir Shaivism itself is the most prominent system in the Tantric tradition and Abhinavagupta is the chief exponent of Tantric philosophy.

According to the science of tantra, male and female are two principles of the universe called Shiva and Shakti. These two principles exist within each individual. There are three main schools of tantra: Kaula, Mishra, and Samaya. The Kaulas, or left-hand tantrists, worship Shakti, and their way of worship involves external rituals, including sexual practices. They meditate on the latent power within (Kundalini) and awaken it at the muladhara chakra, which is situated at the base of the spinal column. Laymen often misuse this path. In the Mishra (mixed or combined) school, inner worship is combined with external practices. The latent force is awakened and led to the anahata chakra (heart center), where it is worshipped. The purest and highest path of tantra is called Samaya or the right-hand path. It is purely yoga; it has nothing to do with any ritual or any form of worship involving sex. Meditation is the key, but this sort of meditation is done on the thousand-petaled lotus, the highest of all. This method of worship is called antaryaga. The knowledge of Sri Chakra is revealed in this school. Knowledge of the chakras, nadis (subtle nerve currents), and pranas (vital forces) and a philosophical knowledge of life are required in order to be accepted as a disciple in this school[6].

Kula System

Kula is Shiva's power (Shakti), which manifests as the entire world[7]. Kula literally means "family" or "extension". The world is an extension of Shiva. The power of Shiva that pervades the universe is also called kundalini (literally: "female coiled serpent") or kula-kundalini. Kundalini is the force or power of Consciousness vibrating in the form of the whole universe. Kundalini is also the vitality or life force (prana) of individual bodies. At the bodily level this energy is known as prana-kundalini.

Since the entire world is an extension of Shiva and directly connected with Him, the world can be used as a means for ascending to Shiva. The Kaula sadhana consists in seeing everything in the world as Shiva. The practice is also called Shiva-bhavana, which means feeling Shiva everywhere.

To use an analogy, when one sees the waves as ocean, one is not seeing the waves but seeing the ocean. One is looking through the wave to the ocean, or seeing the ocean in the waves. Similarly, when one sees the world as Shiva, one sees not the world but Shiva. The world simply becomes a medium to look through. One can see Shiva directly reflected in anything and everything of the world[8].

The Kula system teaches you how you can live in Chaitanya (Universal Consciousness), the real nature of yourself, in both the ascending and the descending act. While you rise from the lowest to the highest you realise your nature, and while you descend from the highest to the lowest you realise your nature.

Ekaikatrapi tattve'pi sattrimsattattvarupata

The difference between the Pratyabhijna System and the Kula System is only that the Pratyabhijna System teaches you how to realize your own nature in one place and exist there, reside there, while the Kula System teaches as how you can rise from the lowest degree of your Self on the same level and state. Shiva, which is realized in *prithvi tattva* is the same level, the same reality of Shiva which is realized in Shiva tattva. Here there is complete realization in every act of the World.

Krama System

Kriya ("activity") ordinary involves krama ("sequence" or "succession")[9]. Activity is usually a series of movements, one after the other. This further involves kala ("time"). There can be no sequence without time; it is also true that there can be no time without sequence. In fact, sequence and time are one and the same; the very sense of "one after the other" is time[10].

Although sequence (krama) seems to be the very nature of activity (Kriya), this is true in the case of ordinary activity (laukika kriya) only; it does not apply to the eternal activity of the Lord[11]. There is no time in Ultimate Reality and thus there is no sequence there[12]. Shiva is akrama ("without sequence"). Therefore, the Kriya of the Shiva level is also akrama, or non-sequential.

In the Krama System you have to rise step by step in succession. This system teaches that step by step realization makes your realization firm.

Although the Krama System existed in the beginning of Kali Yuga having been introduced by the sage Durvasa, the sage Erakanatha who was also known as Shivanandanatha reintroduced it at the end of the 7th century A.D. in Kashmir. Shivanandanatha had only three chief disciples whom he initiated into the Krama System and all three were females, because in this system predominance is given only to sakti. Their names were Keyuravati, Madanika, and Kalyanika. They were quite prominent and were completely informed in the Krama System. Afterwards these ladies further initiated disciples which were both male and female.

Spanda System

Kashmiri Shaivism has many scriptures. These scriptures can never be understood without a highly competent and accomplished teacher. This philosophy views the spirit, mind, body, and all levels of reality in the entire universe as manifestation of the Principle termed *Spanda* spontaneous vibration. The subject matter of these scriptures is *Shaktipath* and awakening the latent force buried in human being[13].

The word *spanda* means "movement" and the *Spanda* School recognizes that nothing can exist without movement. Where there is movement there is life and where there is movement in wakefulness, dreaming, deep sleep, and *turya*. Though some thinkers argue that there is no movement in deep sleep, the philosophers of the *Spanda* System realize that nothing can exist without movement.

The scriptures will not lift a seeker nor can his master elevate him, but when his consciousness is fixed in his own awareness then his soul becomes visible. One has to practice both awareness and equanimity to reach such a state of consciousness.

Awareness and equanimity is meditation. When practiced together, they lead to liberation. Both are essential, just as a bird requires two wings to fly. And they must be equally strong. If one wing of a bird is weak and the other powerful, it cannot fly properly. If one wheel of a cart is small and the other large, it will keep going around in circles. The meditator must develop both awareness and equanimity together in order to advance along the path.

We must become aware of the totality of mind and matter in their subtlest nature. We must develop awareness of sensations throughout the body and maintain equanimity toward them.

By maintaining the constantly refreshed continuity of your awareness in the center of the two breaths (*madhyamam pranam*) through the practice of either ajapa-gayatri or cakrodaya, you settle in your asana and pranayama commences. The movement of your breath becomes very subtle, very refined, as if thin. At this stage you feel like going to sleep, but it is not really sleep. You are proceeding towards the subtle state of awareness (sukshma-gati). Your awareness will not allow you to fall asleep. At this point you enter the fourth state (turya) which is neither the waking state (jagrat), the dreaming state (svapna), nor the deep Sleep State (susupti). This is the beginning of *paramaspanda-tattva*. About this Sankaracarya has said:

If you maintain your awareness at that point which is found between waking and sleeping, you will focused on that supreme felicity which is the supreme bliss of God Consciousness[14].

–*Slokastaka*

This is that point, which is found at the ending of wakefulness and the beginning of sleep, the point between waking and sleeping. This junction is very important, it is the entrance into the state of turya, which has opened as a result of settling into your asana and undergoing pranayama[15].

The teachings of the *Spanda* System, which is an important practical system, are found embodied in the "*Vijnana Bhairava* Tantra", the "*Svacchanda* Tantra", and in the 6th chapter of the "*Tantraloka*".

The *Spanda* System was introduced in Kashmir by the great sage Vasuguptanatha in the beginning of the 8th century AD Vasuguptanatha is the author of both the "Siva Sutras" and the "*Spanda* Karikas". The disciple of Vasuguptanatha was Kallata[16].

DO NOT ESCAPE THE WORLD

Some renounced their homes, some the hermitages;
Stay as you are and be firm in your mind
Thereby you will get established in the Self;
What is the good of smearing ashes.

–*Lalleshwari - Her Spiritual Gems*

Kashmir Shaivism is a vision of perfect human life. The issues connected with family, agriculture, religion, war, Republic, development of mind, renunciation and Yoga have all been comprehended and assimilated in Kashmir Shaivism.

CONCLUSION

If the super Consciousness or Samadhi stage were not Ultimate Reality and achievable by human beings, and were only speculative philosophy, Kashmir Shaivism would resemble subjective Absolutism of Bradley. In the present form it is like

Advaita Vedanta, except that Shiva is Ultimate Reality in it like Brahman in the latter. The difference appears in nomenclature only.

The methods to achieve this highest goal are Pratyabhijna, Kula, Krama and Spanda systems, which in themselves are self contained. There is emphasis on inner purity and experience rather than outer rituals and renunciation. Mundane concerns also find proper place in Kashmir Shaivism.

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5

A Process of Discovery

Kashmir Shaivism is a process of discovery. Some Shaivas believe that in emancipation the body itself is irradiated with the light of Shiva; others think that the souls acquire some miraculous powers. Before they attain union with the Supreme, the souls must consume the fruits of their deeds.

The faculty of action can be set free. For the faculty of knowledge to reach full development the soul had to set aside the false knowledge acquired through faulty means, and surrender itself completely to the Shakti, who is pure intelligence. The faculty of action, if it is to attain its full powers, requires that wrong actions are set aside and the soul given up to the Shakti, which acts as Jnanashakti and also as Kriyashakti.

Shiva exists as a sort of soul (being invisible during bondage) so that soul needs to unite with him and serve him. That eliminates the error. Shiva will treat its deeds as his own, and everything that opposes it as opposing him. Out of love he unites with the soul, to spare it rebirth. If one commits sin he turns that into service to God[1]. Shiva prevents the law of karma from applying to actions of the enlightened soul, by relieving it of them and taking them on himself. Declaring himself the real doer, he puts the deeds down to his own account instead[2].

The *Jivanmukta*, though in the body, is one in feeling and faculty with the Supreme. He does not engage in works, which lead to further embodiments. He is filled with the presence of God. He continues to be embodied until his past karma is

exhausted, and the deeds of the interval are consumed by the grace of God. All the deeds performed by the freed are due to the impulsion of God within them.

Kashmir Shaivism is a process of discovery of individual soul as one with the Universal being through a process based on:

Correct knowledge of the exact nature of universal elements;

Practice in Trika Yoga; and

A highly affectionate and devotional attitude towards the Absolute Reality;

Kashmir Shaivism is the only school of Indian philosophy, which inspires us for both material and spiritual progress. It serves as a sound basis for our national aims of establishing a welfare state. This philosophy is to be presented in the present day style in the light of the psychology of the youngest generations of our nation. The message for them is that world should be accepted in totality. No problem of society, state, nation and individual is to be ignored. A person cannot succeed in any aim of life if he shuts his eyes towards these problems. The whole life of Lord Krishna, as depicted in *Mahabharata*, is a glowing example of practical Shaivism.

As a pious householder, we have to enjoy tasteful worldly objects within the limits laid down by traditional social laws and go on practising Shaiva Yoga side by side. Having attained success in the Yoga and relished the blissful experience of self-awareness, one loses interest in worldly enjoyments. This leads to self-recognition and experience of one's practical Godhead. Be in world - yet away from it. As an elder person, we have to set such an example and create an inspiration for others. Here, it would be very pertinent to narrate an incident of a realised soul, a householder. He was an elderly noble soul engrossed in his Sadhna most of the time. During the evening people would interact with him, join the prayer, followed by little "*prasad*".

A bright young man had an enlightening experience with him. It started with a doubt. Why this holy man is interfering with the cosmic process? During distribution of "*prasad*", the people

would narrate their urgent family concerns to which he would reply "Mother Durga will solve your problems".

One day this young man could express his doubt as he could find a moment alone with him. The noble person explained. "Look, my dear son, I am not living in some forest or hillock. I consider all the people around as my family members. I only direct their attention to God, the eternal Guide, who can give us the real wisdom to bear pleasure or pain".

"Perhaps you are not satisfied", he continued looking at his doubtful countenance. He directed him to get up and reach for the broom which was at the farthest end of the room, hidden behind the door, "Dear, have a close look at the broom", he suggested. "I can see circle of threads tied around" the young man observed.

"I have since mastered the Ashta Siddhis (the eight supernatural powers) which are tied with the broom and kept at the farthest corner of the room", the holy man continued, "I feel you are a bright deserving young man. You verily require my blessings. Please ask any help or "aashirvad" and this broom will grant you". The young man could, thus, realise the 'level of attainment' of this holy man, who knew the real meaning of attachment and detachment[3].

CONCLUSION

The law of gravitation had existed for ever before Newton observed the apple falling to the ground. His genius lay only in discovering the law. Similarly the greatest spiritual law in shaivism is that the individual soul is one with the Universal Spirit, which each one of us has to discover and experiment himself. Shaivism provides us with process. Unlike the natural laws, the spiritual discovery has to be made by each of us. So a measure of sincerity. Detachment and ethical conduct is a must.

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6

Self-Realisation

"Self-realisation", the word 'self' means something different from the body-mind complex. The "SELF" here means, energy that which existed before this body came into existence and that which will continue residue of the personality of a man after his body-mind has been removed. Thus "SELF" is different from 'self'[1].

All talent and all power to work efficiently and gracefully in every walk of life come from the Self, just as all the electric power that moves fans and lights lightbulbs comes from the powerhouse. All creativity, artistic or otherwise, springs forth from the Self. It is from the Self that the illumined understanding of anything comes to the mind as a spontaneous flash in a phenomenon technically called pratibha. Therefore, the more a person is in line with the Self, the more the power flows. Thus, a person of Self-realisation will be a better teacher, a better philosopher, a better scientist, a better leader, a better businessperson, a better manager, and so on.

Kamlakar Mishra in his book "Kashmir Shaivism: The Central Philosophy of Tantricism", dilates upon self-realisation as follows:

"Self-realisation incorporates within itself both morality and the satisfaction of desires. Morality is naturally present in Moksha for two reasons. First, the Self that is attained in Moksha is naturally good. That is why it is called Shiva (literally "the benign"). It would be illogical to think that bad actions could spring forth

from a naturally benign self. Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to say that just as only honey can drop from a honeycomb, only good actions can spring forth from the Shiva-state".

In the Shiva state, or Self-realisation, one feels one's unity with all. "He becomes one with all". It is quite natural for such a person to do good to all. What obstructs the Self is called ignorance (ajnana). Ignorance is defined as the sense of duality (dvaitha-pratha or bheda bhuddha). It is the sense one has that something or someone is "other". When this sense of duality is dispelled and one's unity with all is realized - that is, universal Love is attained - then one of the most essential characteristics of Self-realization is achieved[2].

Self-realisation is possible only through awareness of your own real nature. Awareness that is responsible for the "I" consciousness in all beings, is called "Aham". When this Aham identifies itself with the body, it becomes Ahamkara. This is the false "I" and not the real "I".

The clouds, which are formed due to the Sun's heat, hide the Sun itself. Likewise the mind which is the offspring of the Atma hides the Atma itself. As long as the mind is there, man cannot hope to understand anything about the self, not to speak of realising and experiencing the bliss of the Self. That state in which one is established in the Self at all times and under all circumstances is called "Sakshatkara" Self-realisation[3].

It may be remembered that the Mind is a reservoir for numerous powers. By utilizing the resources, which are hidden within it, one can attain any height of success in the world. If the mind is trained, made one-pointed and inward, it also has power to penetrate into the deeper levels of our being. It is the finest instrument that a human being can ever have[4].

One must make a distinction between the mind that is the ego, and the real self that is Consciousness. The latter helps us to cross the frontiers of the ego-mind and become aware of oneself as the witness of truth.

Normally the scientist of the mind looks outside to what can be perceived by the senses existing in the world of the mind to

ask: What is this? The scientist of consciousness, on the other hand, always looks inside so that which is beyond the senses or the grasp of the mind to ask: What is that?

One has, therefore, to rise beyond the mind to Consciousness to achieve self-realisation. To gain the infinite, universal Atma, the embodied self must break out of the puny, finite little prison of individuality. Desire belongs to the senses, the brain, the mind; once you become free of it, you realise the self, Atma, consciousness, enlightenment, and become one with the cosmic power. Self-realisation is God-realisation. Thus man reaches God.

The seers were aware from the beginning that there are two basic sets of values in life. One is the ethical value of goodness or morality and the other is the material value of pleasure or happiness. The former is technically called sreya, meaning "the good", and the latter is preya, or "the pleasant".

In the Indian system there are four values: Dharma (morality), Artha (money), Kama (satisfaction of desire), and Moksha (self-realisation). Morality comes under "the good"; money and satisfaction of desires fit under "the pleasant".

The seers were also aware that in actual life there is a dichotomy between "the good" and "the pleasant"; people have to undermine or sometimes even totally suppress "the pleasant" in favour of "the good". The seers were therefore quite clear that a value system that is merely "good" with no element of "the pleasant" is not practical. Therefore, they sought to discover a system that synthesized within itself both "the good" and "the pleasant", or truth and beauty, or the good of oneself and the good of others. They found the answer in what is called Self-realization, or Moksha.

God is the ultimate pleasure, uninterrupted happiness. The pleasure of sex is by nature temporary. The body cannot take uninterrupted pleasure for long as it would be destroyed. Wanting to impose fictitious, permanent state of happiness on the body is a serious neurological problem[5].

Moksha is not other worldly value, but the ground of overall success in life. In the path of self-realisation purity, One-

pointedness, and control of mind are essential. In the path of self-realisation, there is no place and scope for selfishness.

Selfishness, or the sense of duality, is the root of all immorality. One can exploit a person only when one considers him or her as other than oneself. But if one considers that person a part of oneself, how can one exploit him or her? A self-realized person will not exploit or harm anyone, as Self-realization is a state of perfect universal love. On the contrary, he or she will help all. Thus Self-realisation is a state of natural, spontaneous morality.

Self-realisation synthesizes within itself the satisfaction of desires and morality, both "the pleasant" and "the good". In Self-realisation one's own best interest and the good of others become one; it is a state that is at once both good and pleasant. In our empirical experience, too, we can find at least one phenomenon that is an example of this synthesis: the phenomenon of love. In love, the good of the lover and the good of the beloved persons become one. A mother, for example, feels her oneness with her child and feels happy in the happiness of the child. Love naturally prompts good action by the lover toward the beloved.

Moreover, besides prompting beneficial activity towards the beloved person, love gives immense satisfaction and joy to the lover himself or herself. The rapture of love is so deep that only a true lover can fully understand it. To use a phrase from Shakespeare, "It blesseth him that gives and him that takes". Love is the chief characteristic of the saints and sages who have achieved some amount of Self-realisation. The more we realize the Self, the greater is the natural flow of love in us. And one moves naturally towards self-realisation or Moksha.

The uniqueness of the tantric conception of Moksha, or Self-realisation, is twofold. First, according to Tantra, moksha is not an other worldly value, it is the ground of overall success in every walk of life. This corrects the misconception that moksha is somehow separate from the present life.

Second, moksha, according to Tantra, does not consist merely of "the good", but is a synthesis of both what is good and what is pleasant.

This notion of Moksha modifies the popular Indian classification of the four values of life. According to the popular classification, money (artha) and the satisfaction of desires (Kama) come under "the pleasant" and morality (dharma) and Self-realisation (moksha) both come under "the good". But according to the Tantric classification, morality alone comes under "the good", as moksha is really a synthesis of both "the good" and "the pleasant", and thus is a value higher than even "the good"[6].

In such a context the philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism occupies a distinguished position among the various schools of religious creed and thought. It provides the complete analysis of human personality and delves into the deepest and most comprehensive psychology of man. In this way, it makes the greatest contribution to furthering of human understanding.

In fact, this universal philosophy focuses on relation between God, Nature and Man, which transcends all the barriers of time, place and diverse human-cultures. It leads to the highest level of self-realisation revealing the inner most secrets of the nature of Self. It integrates all the aspects of life, which are taken in totality. Thus, rather than negation and denial, it celebrates life. Kashmir Shaivism is the only school of Indian philosophy, which can inspire us, simultaneously for both material and spiritual progress. Besides making valuable contribution to furthering of human understanding, it is the highest spiritual philosophy discovered and expressed in the world.

It is a matter of concern that nothing much is done in the land of its birth, rather land of discovery of this philosophy. A Thrill of self confidence, the spirit of bliss, surpassing all barriers of caste, creed and gender, no look back, no regret, the inner journey, see everything as creation of God, etc. - how prominently and conceptually these are emphasised in Kashmir Shaivism.

Some call Kashmir Shaivism as a great paradox, beyond anybody's comprehension. There are two phases, which are quite explicit. The first one is a deep despair. Indeed, it is a deep despair, which confronts us constantly. No achievement seems to satisfy us. Right from the beginning we chase the daily minimum needs and spend or waste our entire life in it. Those who feel that

they are lucky, are truly worse. They have more of dissatisfaction, insecurity, lust for upward move, prone to scheming and outside attacks.

Every act has an urge behind it and it is the urge of self-interest. Whenever we work with expectation of some return, we work in slavery and not in freedom. It is the benefit to be gained which goads us to the action. Had it not been for the benefit, we would not have worked. It means that we have lost our freedom and have become the slaves of that desire for gain. Our energy, urge, desire and direction of work is for something which is outside our own self; some extraneous gain is expected and thus we enter activity. Thus desire makes a man slave[7].

This desire or gain may be in coin or in kind; it may be for fame and name; it may be applause and publicity. It can be a position or a status in the public. The gain can be big or small or it can be concrete or abstract, but it is a return, which is the urge behind the action. One does not undertake to work without any purpose[8].

This purpose may be noble or ignoble. A servant in our office may work for pecuniary gain. A public servant may work for power, fame or wealth and such other benefits. The benefits desired differ from man to man, but that man is a slave of such benefits, is a fact. This self-interest is the first urge in the activity of any type.

The concept of the word 'self' differs, diametrically in different references. In self-interest, it indicates the interest pertaining to the body-mind complex wherein the physical and mental pleasures are indicated. The body desires some sensual pleasures and the mind aspires for suprasensuous happiness.

But in the word - "Self-realisation", the word 'self' means something different from the body-mind complex. The "SELF" here means, that energy which existed before this body came into existence and that which will continue residue of the personality of a man after his body-mind has been removed. Thus "SELF" is different from 'self'[9]. The activity, service, work done for self-interest is of a baser type and is no service at all in the real sense of the term.

In this world good and evil go together. They are just the obverse and the reverse sides of the same coin of life. What appear to be pleasure today results in pain tomorrow[10], that is law of life.

Every good carries some evil as its appendage. Life is a fine blending of joys and miseries. Bearing this in mind, one has to participate freely and willingly in this gymnasium of the world according to time, ability and strength. As things stand today, one feels something should be accomplished or introduced as good now, but every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Thus one good ushers in another evil. One has to think about it very seriously at the outset.

That service is the best and the noblest which is performed with the attitude of total surrender to God. "He has endowed me with all the possible capacities and I must utilize every mite of that energy, power, intellect, strength, and all other possessions to the best of my ability for the glory of SELF. It is divine design that I should render service on His behalf"[11]. He desires the betterment of the world and I am being used just as a tool or a means to carry out His design. I am just an instrument in His hands[12].

We have to play our role in this world with all vigour and enthusiasms. The best illustration of this type of service we find in the duties of a nurse. She treats the patient very kindly and sincerely. As soon as her duty is over, she hands over the charge to the next nurse and gets herself freed without any feeling of attachment. If the patient is serious, she does not feel anxious or if he dies she is not grieved. She has no attachment whatsoever nor obsession. But that does not mean that she does the duty indifferently or heartlessly. No, she puts her heart and soul into the care of the patient. But she looks to the things objectively. When we nurse a patient who is our relative, we have attachment and are visibly moved by any serious turn in his physical condition. It is because of the strong tie of relationship that binds us to the patient.

The action must be performed without any attachment but sincerely and honestly to the best of our ability with an attitude of being a tool only. We have been called upon to execute

whatever is essential and possible as willed by God. The work should be under taken in the spirit as doing His work. Such work elevates us and leads to Self-realisation, which is the supreme goal of human life.

In our daily life we can experience the morning Sun, which blesses us and dispels all darkness. The love of near and dear ones sustains us. The beauty of nature, ever motivating and ever fascinating that thrills us.

What can we conclude from these opposite, rather totally diverse explanations. Let us take recourse to the wisdom of our ancient seers-our ancient knowledge. The message is:

Good and bad are part of the same coin everything emanates from the Almighty Lord, the Param Shiva[13]. It is natural that we must strive from bondage to liberation. Liberation, according to Kashmir Shaivism, means Pratyabhijna or recognition of one's true nature which means the original, pure "I" - consciousness. This pure - consciousness is immediate, non-relational awareness. To be integrated to the divine "I" is nothing else but the awareness of one's true nature". The Highest Attainment however, is that of Shiva Consciousness in which the Entire Universe appears as "I" - Consciousness[14].

The self is not absolutely beyond apprehension because it is apprehended as the content of the concept 'I' and because the self, opposed to non-self is well known in the world as an immediately perceived (i.e., self-revealing) entity. Samanya laksana of Brahman is known to all as 'I' but visesalaksana of Brahman as sat-cit-ananda[15] is known only to jnanis. There is no difference of the learned from the savage or animals in regard to empirical behaviour like eating, sleeping and procreating.

We are both actors and spectators in the great drama of existence", says Niels Bohr. The soul, the 'I', is a 'Two-in-one' - the actor "I" and the spectator "I". The actor "I" is the "I" that goes through one's roles in life, the agent, sowing actions and reaping fruits. The Spectator "I" is the pure self, pure consciousness, atman, the silent observer or the sheer witness - *Sakshi cheta kevalo nirgunascha.*

The essence of spiritualism is the separation of the actor "I" and the spectator "I" and the resultant freedom for the later from emotional involvement in the roles of the former. That is the gist of the Vedas, the Upanishads the Gita, the Yoga Sutras and all. The spirit is the spectator standing by the actor and watching the latter going through his roles and functions. Practising spiritualism is training oneself to identify oneself with the spectator and keep aloof from the actor. And this is the state of self-realisation.

Self-realisation is the state of universal love, the creative activity is generally directed towards the welfare of society. The Indian mythology of demons (asuras) suggests this. Many of the famous asuras first performed tapasya ("Self-mortification" which is symbolic of the mortification of the ego) and did intense devotion to Lord Siva. As a result the Lord, being pleased, granted them unusual power that they subsequently misused; they were then punished on that account. All energy, constructive or destructive, is from the Higher Self anyway. When one displays tremendous creativity and work in any field - secular or religious - one is, to a small degree at least, in unity with the Self. Aesthetic creativity also ensues from the Self. The joy of the Self-expresses itself in creativity in art.

The origin of all the arts and aesthetic disciplines from Shiva may be sheer mythology but it suggests a truism, namely, that the artistic creativity originates from the self or Shiva. The path of Self-realisation, or Shiva-prapti, is not devoid of earthly beauty; it is rich with creativity, fulfillment, and love for one's fellow beings.

All Indian philosophers commonly accept the view that ignorance is the cause of bondage and perfect knowledge is the cause of freedom (moksha). Yet, in reality, these philosophers have not completely understood the reality of knowledge and ignorance. However, Kashmir Shaivism explains that jnana (knowledge) is knowing one's own nature which is all Being (sat), all consciousness (cit), and all bliss (ananda). Ajnana (ignorance) is ignoring this nature and this is the cause of this samsara, which carries one in the field of repeated births and deaths. Swami Lakshman in "Kashmir Shavism: The Secret Supreme", elaborates:

"Kashmir Shaivism explains that ignorance (ajnana) is of two kinds: paurusa ajnana; and bauddha ajnana.

Paurusa ajnana is that kind of ignorance wherein one is unaware of realizing their own nature in samadhi. This kind of ignorance is removed by the grace of Masters and by meditating upon ones own Self. And when this ignorance is removed you are situated in the real knowledge of Shaivism, which is all being, all consciousness, all bliss. This kind of knowledge is called paurusa jnana. When you possess paurusa jnana you realize your nature of Self perfectly.

Bauddha ajnana (intellectual ignorance) occurs only when you are completely ignorant of the philosophical truth of the monistic thought of Shaivism. And bauddha ajnana is removed by studying those monistic Shaiva texts, which explain the reality of the Self. In reality, therefore, these Shaiva texts are the cause of your being carried from bauddha ajnana to bauddha jnana.

Bauddha jnana, therefore, is intellectual and is developed through the intellect. Paurusa jnana, on the other hand, is practical and is developed through practice. Paurusa jnana is predominant over bauddha jnana because when you possess only paurusa jnana even then you are liberated in the real sense and attain liberation. In this case, however, liberation is attained only after leaving your body. When, however, at the same time you also attach bauddha jnana to paurusa jnana, which means that on the one hand you practice on your own being and on the other hand you go into the depth of the philosophical thought of the monistic Shaiva texts and elevate your intellectual being, then you become a Jivanmukta, one who is liberated while living. If, however, you possess only bauddha jnana and not paurusa jnana then you will not attain liberation either at the time of death or while living in the body. Bauddha jnana without paurusa jnana is useless. Bauddha jnana will bear fruit only when paurusa jnana is present and not otherwise.

If an aspirant is only attached to practical knowledge and not to theoretical knowledge, believing that the only real knowledge is practical knowledge which is the realizing of ones own nature, then he is incorrect from a Shaiva point of view. If only paurusha

jnana is cultivated and bauddha jnana is totally ignored then there is every possibility that paurusha jnana may decrease day by day, slowly fading away so that in the end it does not remain at all. It is the greatness of bauddha jnana that with its power if firmly establishes paurusa jnana. In this respect, therefore, bauddha jnana is more predominant than paurusa jnana"[16].

It needs to be emphasised that Tantra is based on the actual experience of the seers, yogis and spiritualists. The findings of the tantric seers are verified and confirmed by a long-standing tradition of yogis reaching up to the present. Anyone can verify the truth of the findings for himself or herself. There is also no risk involved. Thus Tantra is a science - a spiritual science. The technology of spiritual science is called yoga. Tantra presents yoga in a variety of forms.

There can be no doubt that reason is the only available tool for making any judgment. Even the suprarational does not oppose reason. To be beyond reason means to be unknowable by reason, not to be irrational or anti-rational. Therefore, reason is the best tool and the best criterion for determining the real purport of the Tantra, just as it is the best tool for judging anything else. Even when we accept revelation (shruti), we do so because reason tells us that we cannot know or experience reality through reason or sense perception, and therefore we have to resort to revelation. It is only by using reason that we become aware of the limitations of reason itself and recognize the need to accept revelation.

That Reality is beyond reason is made clear by reason alone. Reason is required to make a revelation intelligible. The Tantric discovery points out that the phenomenon of consciousness, which we call the "Self" or the "I", that appears at the surface level is just the tip of a bigger reality lying deeper in us.

Consciousness is like an iceberg, only a tiny portion of which is visible above the surface, or like an artesian spring that is invisibly connected to a deeper and vaster underground water reserve. If we accept this premise, it follows that we can attain self-realisation but reach the deeper levels of our reality step by step[17].

Self- realisation can be achieved in degrees. Even in our normal state we have some degree of Self-realisation, as the power

of consciousness is already working in us in the form of our mental faculty. Obviously it is possible that in different people this consciousness will manifest in varying degrees, either naturally or by the deliberate process of uncovering or unfolding the qualities of Consciousness. We can logically stretch this process to the extent of achieving the fullest manifestation of Consciousness - Self-realisation, or spiritual attainment in the highest degree.

CONCLUSION

All religions and their theologies are based on the a priori condition that some element in us, call it soul, Atma, self or consciousness survives bodily death. This belief in a priority was all right so long it was well received. However, in this age of materialism, this very presumption has been effectively attacked. For about a century and a half now, the world has been under serious dominance of scientific materialism. Religions have constantly yielded ground to materialism. Fanaticism has grown because higher religious beliefs have been brushed aside.

Anyway, now we are returning to the basic truth the religions stood for. Findings in para-psychology on ESP, clairvoyance, spontaneously remembered previous births, hypnotic regression to previous births all show that there are higher regimes and that we are immortal and survive bodily death.

This finding can be confirmed by all of us through Self-Realisation. Logically speaking, the Self or Shiva is the seer, the hearer, the knower in us. You cannot see the seer of seeing, the hearer of the hearing or knower of the knowing; as Upanishads put it. The existence of this self has to be taken for granted. It self-realisation one puts all the impression coming in from the senses, aside. The mutual interactions of such impressions called thoughts or working mind have also to be emptied out. Then one realises that one is the self itself. The individual soul and self are one. One also has the personal experience of immortality. The actor 'I' and the spectator 'I' merge into one whole.

One who has thus realised self or Shiva becomes fearless, all loving and ethically par excellent. He is in the world but not of the world.

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10. *Gita,* Chapter 18 - Verse 38:

    yad agre ca'nubandhe ca sukham mohanam atmanah
    nidralasyapramadottham tat tamasam udahrtam
11. *Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter XII, verse 10:

    abhyase py asamartho si matkarmaparamo bhava
    madartham api karmani kurvan siddhim avapsyasi
12. *Bhagavad Gita*, chapter XI, chapter 33:

    tasmat tvam uttistha yaso labhasva jitva satrun bhunksva rajyam samrddham
    mayai'vai ie nihatah purvam eva nimittamatram bhava savyasacin
13. Param Shiva is the ultimate reality who is the nature of Bliss itself and all complete in Himself. He is beyond description, beyond all manifestation, beyond limitation of form, time and space. He is eternal, infinite, all pervading, all knowing and all powerful. In fact, this reality is ineffable and beyond all descriptions.
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7

Hindu Scriptures

The history of India does not begin either with the advent of Muslim aggressors or the colonization by Britain. It has a long history. And in its course the nation acquired its own culture, traditions and values, which shaped the country. Unfortunately, the intellectual tradition based on Hindu scriptures and experience of the sages, could not maintain the same vigour in the past medieval period with a few exceptions like Vivekananda, Dayananda Saraswati, Aurobindo Ghosh, R.G. Bhandarkan, and Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar.

Hindu scriptures are the treasure of Hindu wisdom and are the revelations of saints and sages. They are *Vedas, Upanishadas, Smritis, Puranas, Agmas, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagvad Gita, Darshanas, Tripitaks, Guru Granth Sahe*b etc.

The Vedas are four in number and they are: *Rig Veda*; *Yajur Veda*; *Sama Veda* and *Atharva Veda*. Each Veda consists of four parts: *Mantra*; *Brahmana*; *Aranyaka* and *Upanishada*.

Mantras - Mantras are hymns in praise of the Vedic Gods. Mantra is a very short scripture, similar to a dharani, usually of a few Sanskrit words. Mantras are not magical, but rather express the essence of a scripture or attitude of mind. Mantra is a syllable, word, or phrase, which utilizes the symbolic power of sound as a means to experience things as they really are. The term mantra was first used in the Hindu Vedas to designate a verse utilized to invite deities to witness a sacrificial act. The term is derived from the Sanskrit verb root *man*, literally meaning, "to think". As such, mantras can be seen as "mental tools".

Brahmanas - Brahmanas are the guidebooks for the performance of sacrificial rites. Brahmanas are the portion of the Vedas, distinct from its mantra (hymnal) portion, which contains rules for the employment of mantras in various sacrifices.

Aranyakas - Aranyakas or forest books give philosophical interpretation of the rituals by allegorizing them. Aranyakas is the "Forest Treatise"; sacred Hindu texts whose speculative philosophy was created and studied in the solitude of the forests and which served as a precursor to the Upanishads[1]. Aranyaka is a class of religious and philosophical writings, closely connected with the Brahmanas.

Upanishads - The Upanishads, though remote in time, are not remote in thought. They disclose the working of the primal impulses of the human soul which rise above the differences of race and of geographical position[2].

Upanishads are the concluding portion of the Vedas (Vedanta). Upanishads and Vedas are the part of India's rich philosophical heritage. Upanishads are the Hindu scriptures, which elaborate the philosophical truths of the Vedas.

One of about 150 highly philosophical works, some in prose, some in verse and some in both, composed between c. 600 BC and c. 200 BC. They mark the beginning of mysticism and Hindu philosophy. Some are called Aranyakas 'forest treatises', as the ascetics taught in the forest. They teach the essential identity of the Atman, the individual soul, with the Paramatman, the highest, universal, all-embracing world-soul, the positive nucleus of peace, light and understanding. The philosopher must recognize this essence in the nucleus of all beings, just as the future oak is already in a corn. Brahma, God, is one and lives in the human heart, his fortress. This atman remains a pure and sinless soul, which reverts to Paramatman at death.

Upanishads are sacred treatises, which were neither written by one author nor belong to one particular period. They are spread over several hundreds of years, and have got many authors. They, in fact, are the sermons given by the spiritual teachers to the students who approached them to learn Brahma Vidya, the

knowledge of Brahman. They are, in fact, the dialogues between the teachers and the taught. There are above 200 Upanishads but only those which have been commented upon by Shri Shankaracharya are regarded as authentic. These are 10 in number– *Isha, Kena, Prashna, Aitreya, Taitareya, Mundaka, Mandukya, Chhandogya, Brihadaranyaka* and *Shwetashwatar*. These are regarded as the oldest Upanishads. The Upanishads contain the essence of Vedas. The Vedanta philosophy is mainly based on them. Every Verse of these scriptures contains lofty, sublime and original thoughts, which are the revelations of the sages and the Rishis.

It is said that many Upanishads existed. One hundred and eight have been preserved, these ranging in length from a few hundred to many thousands of words. Some are in prose, and some are in verse. Of the one hundred and eight Upanishads, sixteen were recognised by Shankara as authentic and authoritative. On ten of these he wrote elaborate commentaries, which included quotations from the other six; and it is these ten which have come to be regarded as the principal Upanishad.

They are speculations in philosophy as also mystical utterances revealing the most profound spiritual truths, and they in fact constitute the foundation of Hinduism.

Smritis - The word Smriti has a double meaning. The Vedas were direct revelations: they were "Heard"; on the other hand, the smritis were "remembered". Thus a scripture other than the Vedas is smriti. That is the broad meaning. The narrower meaning is "a code or law of domestic and social conduct"[3].

Smritis are like law books. Many of our Rishis have written Smritis. There are more than twenty-five Smritis. Well known amongst them are: Manu Smriti; Yagnavalkya Smriti; and Parasar Smriti.

Puranas - There are eighteen Puranas: Brahma; Padma; Vishnu; Shiva; Bhagwat; Narada; Markandeya; Agni; Bhavishya; Brahmavaivarta; Linga; Varaha; Skanda; Vamana; Kurma; Matsya; Garuda; and Brahmanda.

There are also Upa Puranas, and they are as follows:

Adi; Nrisinha; Vayu; Shiva-Dharma; Nandikeshware; Ushanah; Varuna; Shwamba; Kalika; Maheshwara; Devi; Bhargava; Vasistha; Parasara; and Surya. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are the three famous gods in all the Puranas.

The hymns of the Rig-Veda were almost all composed in praise of the gods. The social and other materials are of secondary importance, as these references had only to be mentioned incidentally in giving vent to their feelings of devotion to the god. The gods here are however personalities presiding over the diverse powers of nature or forming their very essence. They have therefore no definite, systematic and separate characters like the Greek gods or the gods of the later Indian mythical works, the Puranas.

The powers of nature such as the storm, the rain, the thunder, are closely associated with one another, and the gods associated with them are also similar in character. The same epithets are attributed to different gods and it is only in a few specific qualities that they differ from one another. In the later mythological compositions of the Puranas the gods lost their character as hypo-static powers of nature, and thus became actual personalities and characters having their tales of joy and sorrow like the mortal here below. The Vedic gods may be contrasted with them in this, that they are of an impersonal nature, as the characters they display are mostly but expressions of the powers of nature[4]. Puranas are collection of sacred Hindu texts containing cosmology and genealogies of gods, sages, and rulers.

Agamas - Agamas are traditional or canonical text, corresponding to the Nikayas of the Pali Sutta Pitaka. They include the Dirghagama, Madhyamagama, Ekottaragama, Samyuktagama, and Ksudrakagama[5].

The philosophical views are found in the Agama literature is pretty extensive. Agamas contain some elements of philosophical thought, but their interest is more on religious details of the cult of Shaivism. We find therefore a good deal of ritualism, discussion of the architectural techniques for the foundation of temples, and mantras and details of worship connected with the setting up of

the phallic symbol of Shiva. Yet in most of the Agamas there is a separate section called the Vidya-pada in which the general philosophical view under-lying the cult is enunciated[6].

They are theological treatises and manuals of worship. There are three main branches:

Shaivagama; Shaktagama and Vaishnavagama

Shaivagama - It is believed that 28 Tantras were manifested from Lord Shiva. If Upatantras are the total comes to 208 and from these Tantras 64 have been given more importance.

Shaktagama - There are 64 main books of the Shakta branch, but unfortunately some of them are not available.

Vaishnavagama - Vaishnavagamas are 215 in number of which the following are important: Ishwara, Paushkara, Parama, Shatwata, Brihad Brahma, Jnanamrita - Sara - Samhita.

Ramayana - This great epic depicts the story of Rama, the famous incarnation of Lord Vishnu and an ideal of all the Hindus. The author of this epic was Valmiki. Ramayana has been written in many languages of Bharat, and has become the torch light of Hindu Dharma not only in Bharat but also in far away countries.

India has its two grand Epic Poems: *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, which are known to be historical books. In the *Epic Ramayana* composed by Muni Valmiki in Sanskrit language there is a complete description of the story of Sri Rama. There, through the character of the excellent human being Shri Rama and the character of the persons of his family and those who came in contact with them, a beautiful and grand spectacle of the high values upheld by the Indian culture have been depicted. For the other languages of India Ramayana has served as an essential subsistence. The story of Rama described by Valmiki in Ramayana has been presented by Tulsidas, by writing *Ram Charitamanasa*, in the Avadhi language and that way made it available to most ordinary persons at their homes. *Krttivasa Ramayana* in Bengali language, *Madhava Kandali Ramayana* in Assamese, *Kamba Ramayana* in Tamil are the very few which are being mentioned

here. In other languages too, various versions of Ramayana have been produced from time to time. *Adhyatma Ramayana* and a Ramayana by Guru Govind Singh too are famous. Even in tribal languages also, with local variations, story of Shri Rama is prevalent. Every corner of India is replete with Rama. Therefore, Rama's story is woven in the folk songs as well[7].

Mahabharata - Another splendid epic saga penned by Maharshi Ved Vyasa, scintillatingly narrating the dispute between the families of two brothers Pandu and Dhritarashtra, known as Pandavas and Kauravas, over the domain of Bharatavarsha. Vyasa skilfully highlights the finest aspects of Bharatiya culture by manipulating inter play between the treacherous Kauravas and the upright Pandavas. That the righteousness is always the ultimate winner over injustice, is his underlying message to humanity.

The Mahabharata, with one-lakh verses, is considered the longest poem in the world. The sage-poet Ved Vyasa, the author of the Mahabharata, is said to have had the service of Lord Ganesha as his scribe[8].

The Mahabharata is an account of the origin, the actions and the aftermath of a Great War between the five Pandava brothers and their cousins, the Kaurava princes. The story begins with their childhood and their growing up into manhood. In the epic all the human virtues, love, devotion, tenderness, charity etc. are exemplified and the weakness of human character like hatred, ego, jealousy are also to be found in this great human drama. The story of the Mahabharata illustrates that good always triumphs over evil.

Lord Krishna plays a superb, masterly role all along. Geeta an historically renowned dialogue between Shri Krishna and Arjuna right in the middle of the battlefield, and a fountain of spiritual inspiration for millions even to this day, is a precious part of this anthology. The Gita is the most cherished of all the sacred scriptures of the Hindus. The Gita is an episode in the sixth canto (parva) of the enormous epic Mahabharata.

The serene and consistent doctrine of the Gita-that God exists, that we may reach God through spiritual knowledge, through the performance of our duties (action) and through love

for God - ponders over and disposes of the same spiritual questions which exercise the minds of people of all lands. Listen to the reading or better still read the Gita and immediately you feel yourself in divine presence. The message one finds in the literature of the Gita though thought out in a bygone age has a contemporary universal significance[9].

In the battlefield of Kurukshetra, in Mahabharata, the precept, which was advanced towards the infatuated Arjuna by Krishna, is found recorded in Srimad Bhagavad-Gita. It is part of the Bhisma Parva of Mahabharata. In this the immortality of soul and the principle of disinterested action (Niskama Karma) have been propounded.

Karma Yoga is a way of the Vedas, when performed with a certain attitude, become Karma Yoga. Karma Yoga is an attitude because of which karma; deed or effort becomes yoga. It does not matter whether the actions are religious or worldly. Even Yogis perform actions for the purification of their mind. A Karmayogi's mind is a *satvik* or pure mind. His actions are motivated with selfless service, love and compassion, devoid of any expectation. They are offerings to God, motivated to bring light into others' lives. In the happiness of others lies their happiness.

According to the Vedas we are not isolated beings as we are right in the midst of the world and so we are related to all of creation. The law of nature applies to everyone. If you strike the right chord with the world around you, then you are a karmayogi, in sync with nature and creation. When you strike a balance with your environment you are finely tuned with nature and a quantum leap can take place in the progress of a person with such a change in one's attitude.

Karma Yoga is from the Sanskrit root *yuj* meaning to join the atman with the paramatman, or the self with the divine, also called Buddhiyoga in the Bhagavad Gita, Uses actions as a means for acquiring a mature, composed, and contemplative mind. It's aim is to eliminate impurities of the mind by neutralizing likes and dislikes gathered in one's self.

In Bhagvad Gita has been effected a beautiful harmonization of the Karmayoga (meditative unattached way of action), Bhaktiyoga

(Yoga of devotion), Raja Yoga or Dhyana yoga (Yoga of concentration) and Jnana Yoga (Yoga of Truth-realization). Gita is divided into 18 chapters and contains 700 verses (sloka). Vedanta Philosophy which is based on the studies of the Vedas and Upanishads along with Brahmasutra regards Gita as the third source of its study, making thereby Gita as one of the Prasthanatrayi (three basic points of departure). The connection of the Upanishads and Gita is so close that it is said that the Upanishads are the cows, Gita is the milk which Krishna milches from them for Arjuna[10].

After the golden years of the Vedas (2000-1000 BC) changed to the conditions described in the epics of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana (1000-400 BC) the caste principles on which Hindu society was organised began being questioned from within. Kshatriya nobleman who founded Buddhism contested the religious hegemony of the Brahmins. This new religion rejected the determination of status by birth and the hierarchical ranking of castes. For more than two hundred years it posed a real threat to Hinduism. Then with superlative missionary zeal Adi Shankaracharya almost single handedly restored the authority of the Vedas as the basis of Hindu thought. Not by force, but by the power of persuasion. By his discourses throughout the length and breadth of Hindustan this great man put an end to the hegemony of Buddhism in India. He did this by exercising his time-honoured right to propagate his own religion - and he succeeded. The inhabitants of this vast land were reabsorbed into the Hinduism that had begotten by them. An oriental scholar in pithy phrase has described the story of this mass conversion: "Brahmanism Killed Buddhism by a fraternal embrace"[11].

There is no dearth of Shankaracharyas in India. The ways and means can be developed and adopted to recheck not only decline of Hinduism but to display an art of besieger faith a view to defeat the forces unfriendly to the humanity. Both Buddha and Shankaracharya came as reformists, and not to destroy Hinduism or Buddhism. Many have tried to 'reform' was to purify or emancipate rather than destroy Hinduism under the disguise of 'reform', then they have met with success too in their reforms.

The Indians are wise, courageous and strong enough to safeguard their interests and protect their treasures of wisdom -

scriptures in Kashmir and elsewhere. Jehadis, terrorists from the adjoining countries will not succeed in the designs to divide people in the name of Jehad and by other nefarious activities.

Darshanas (Philosophy) - In the Indian context, philosophy is a science of perceptional truth and its varied aspects; it is broadly divided into two categories: Orthodox or (astik); heterodox (nastik). The six philosophies: Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Purva Mimansa, and Uttara Mimansa pertain to the orthodox group, because they recognise the authority of the Vedas. However, the Mimansas and the Sankhya philosophies do not believe in God as the creator of this world.

Philosophy a term that cannot be uncontroversially defined in a single formula, used to cover a wide variety of intellectual undertakings all of which combine a high degree of generality with more or less exclusive reliance on reasoning rather than observation and experience to justify their claims. The chief agreed constituents of philosophy are epistemology, or the theory of knowledge, metaphysics, and ethics. There is a philosophy of every major form of intellectual activity of less than wholly general scope: science and others[12].

Sankhya - Maharshi Kapil was the author of this Darshan. Sankhya is a dualistic, realistic school of classical Hindu philosophy. It admits two ultimate realities - Purusha and Prakriti. Purusha is intelligent and consciousness is the very essence of it. Prakriti is eternal unconsciousness principle (Jada).

Yoga- Yoga is from Sanskrit word Yuj, "union". The process of linking with the Supreme. The highest connotation of the word Yoga in Hindu philosophy is union of the individual soul with Spirit through scientific methods of meditation. Within the larger spectrum of Hindu philosophy, Yoga is one of six orthodox systems: Vedanta, Mimamsa, Sankhya, Vaisesika, Nyaya, and Yoga. There are also various types of yoga methods: Hatha Yoga, Mantra Yoga, Laya Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Raja Yoga. Raja Yoga, the "royal" or complete yoga, is that which is taught by Self-Realization Fellowship, and which Bhagavan Krishna extols to his disciple Arjuna in the Bhagavad-Gita:

"The yogi is greater than body-disciplining ascetics, greater even than the followers of the path of wisdom or of the path of action; be thou, O Arjuna, a Yogi![13]"

Maharshi Patanjali wrote this Darshan. It is closely allied to Sankhya but admits the existence of God. It considers the practice of Yoga meaning the cessation of mental function as essential, it advocates eight stages of Yoga practices, namely: Yama or restraint; Niyama or moral culture; Asana or postures; Pranayama or breath control; Pratyahara or withdrawal of senses Dharana or attention Dhyana or meditation and Samadhi or concentration.

Nyaya - Nyaya considers four sources of knowledge: Perception; inference; comparison; testimony. It believes that self is distinct from the body and the mind, and that consciousness is not the eternal quality of the self. It believes in many independent and eternal realities like the five kinds of atoms of: earth; water; fire; air and ether, and space, time, mind, and soul. According to it God is the ultimate cause of creation, maintenance and destruction of the world. Individual souls enjoy pleasure and suffer pain according to their normal desert. If they obey the wise and guidance of God, sooner or later they will be finally released from all sufferings.

Nyaya literally, means "model,' "axiom," or "system". In philosophy Nyaya refers to the science of logic. In Hinduism, one of the classical six darsanas is Nyaya. It also refers to the study of logic in Buddhism[14].

Vaisesika - Vaisesika is the basic text of the Vaisesika Darsana in Indian Philosophy, probably composed in the first century A.D[15]. Vaisesika is allied to Nyaya system as regards to God and liberation. It considers God as the creator. Atoms are eternal from which God has created seven categories of objects - substance, (dravya), quality (guna) action (karma), generality (samanya), Particularity (vishesha), the relation of inherence (samavaya) and non-existence (abhava).

Mimansa - Mimansa believes in Vedic reutilization and considers the Vedas as eternal, self-existing and free from any

errors. It believes in the reality of souls but does not believe in Supreme Soul or God as the creator of this Universe. It is a school of Indian Philosophy. Its primary object is to defend and justify Vedic ritualism.

Uttar-Mimansa or Vedanta - It believes that God (Brahman) is the only reality. It is called monism of Shankara according to which there is no multiplicity. The entire creation is Maya-illusion - only appearance. It is a system of philosophy (one of the six darsanas); the enquiry into later portion of the Veda.

Vedanta is the foundation of all theories of self-perfection, though the techniques may differ from place to place and from master to master.

–*Swami Chinmayananda*

Jain Agamas - These are the authoritative sacred books of Jainism.

Tripitak - Three main books of the Buddhist fall in this category of tripitak. They are Vinayana (monastic rules), Sutras (teaching, scriptures) and Abhidharma (philosophical analysis).

Tripitaka is the "Three Baskets" of the Buddhist Canon meaning the three branches of the Buddhist scriptures, Dharma. They are Sutras, which contain the Buddha's teachings; Vinayas, which contain his disciplines; and Abhidharmas, which contain various commentaries and essays on Buddhist doctrines and precepts.

Guru Grantha - This is the holy book of the Sikhs. It contains the words of wisdom of the nine Sikh gurus and other Bharatiya saints. Those of Guru Govind Singh are contained in the Dashama Grantha.

The holy book was Compiled by Guru Arjan Dev in 1604 and finally completed and edited by Guru Gobind Singh, who, shortly before his death in 1708, invested the holy book as Guru, frequently referred to thereafter as the Guru Granth Sahib - the living voice of the Gurus.

CONCLUSION

The above references on various scriptures of Eastern religions is simply an attempt at listing the prominent ones. Unlike the scriptures of religions of sematic origin, the emphasis is not so much on faith as on philosophical aspects. The aim of Eastern philosophy is Self-Realisation that is spiritual Experience and Moksha which is getting rid of the cycle of birth-death and rebirth. Obviously the theory of Reincarnation is a very important distinguishing feature of these religions, namely Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism.

The philosophical approaches are different. Monism, dualism, monotheism, polytheism, pluralistic realism all exist in Eastern Religions with due justifications. Yet the aim of self-realisation, Moksha or Nirvana has been sharply kept in focus, practical paths of meditation and prayer are both accepted and encouraged. For philosophic mind there is enough dialectic and ratiocination in Shankara's Advaita Vedanta.

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8

Shaiva Scriptures

Satyuga is the first age of the four ages Satyuga, Tretayuga, Dvaparayuga, and Kaliyuga. These comprise the four fold cyclical life of the universe. In the beginning of Satyuga, Lord Shiva appeared in the form of Svacchandanan.

Lord Shiva wanted to enlighten the universe by manifesting the existence of the Tantras. These tantras, are known as the scriptures in Kashmir Shaivism. In order to accomplish this He manifested these Tantras through his five mouths. Initially each of these mouths, Isana, Tatpurusha, Sadyojata, Vamadeva, and Aghora, created one Tantra. Then two mouths joined together and created one Tantra from each combination of two mouths. And then three mouths joined together created one Tantra from each combination of three mouths. And then four mouths joined together, and then five mouths, and these combinations of mouths, produced all of the Tantras of Kashmir Shaivism.

Lord Shiva Himself narrated the Shaiva scriptures in the form of Svacchandanatha. In this form Lord Shiva narrated these scriptures with His five mouths, symbolizing His five great energies:

These are the energy of consciousness (chit-Shakti), the energy of bliss (ananda-shakti), the energy of will (iccha-shakti), the energy of knowledge (jnana-shakti), and the energy of action (kriya-shakti). These five mouths are called the five forms of Svacchandanatha and are individually referred to as Isana, Tatpurusha, Sadyojata, Vamadeva, and Aghora.

The scriptures, called Tantras in Kashmir Shaivism are classified into three divisions depending on whether the knowledge they contain is monistic (abheda), monistic cum dualistic (bhedabheda), or dualistic (bheda). The monistic (abheda) Tantras are known as the Bhairava Tantras;

The monistic cum dualistic (bhedabheda) Tantras are known as the Rudra Tantras; and

The dualistic (bheda) Tantras are known as the Shiva Tantras.

There are sixtv four Bhairava Tantras, eighteen Rudra Tantras, and ten Shiva Tantras, making a total of ninety-two Tantras. These tantras are manifested in three ways:

Initially ten Tantras came into existence which were dualistic (dvaita) and are called Shiva Tantras. These Tantras, which are not connected with Kashmir Shaivism, are filled with dualism.

Then eighteen Tantras came into existence which were filled with that thought which is monistic dualism (bhedabheda). These Tantras are called Rudra Tantras. And finally these five mouths came into existence in such a way that each and every mouth was simultaneously filled with the other four mouths.

Here four of the five energies were inserted into the fifth energy in such a way that it became full with all five energies. No one energy was in predominance, all were equal. And this happened to each and every energy. Simultaneously, from these mouths, came out Bhairava Tantras which are filled only with monistic thought (abheda). These Bhairava Tantras, which are the Tantras connected with Kashmir Shaivism, are sixty-four in number.

In Bhairava Tantras Lord Shiva is shown to be in predominance everywhere, in Shiva and in all of His energies He is there in Fullness. He is equally present in everything and everywhere. You cannot say that something is closer to Him and something else is farther away. In everything he is there fully and completely[1].

All these Tantras, whether abheda, bhedabheda, or bheda, are the creation of Lord Shiva Himself in the form of

Svacchandanatha. Svacchandanatha, while creating these Tantras through His five mouths, possessed eighteen arms. These eighteen arms are symbols of the eighteen elements or tattvas. These tattvas are off-shoots of His five great shaktis.

Chit-Shakti gives rise to one element, manas-tattva, and element of mind.

Ananda-Shakti gives rise to two elements, buddhis and ahamkara, the elements of intellect and ego.

Iccha-shakti gives rise to five elements, which are, the five vital airs (vayu) of the body these are prana, apana, samana, udana, and vyana.

Jnana-Shakti also gives rise to five elements, known as the Jnanendriyas; These are the five elements of knowledge, which are smell (ghrana), taste (jihva), touch (tvak), sight (caksuh), and hearing (srotra).

Kriya-Shakti gives rise to the five elements of action, the five Karmendriyas. These include the organ of generation (upastha), the organ of excretion (payu), and the organ of mobility (pada), the organ of holding (pani), and the organ of speech (vak).

These eighteen arms of Lord Shiva, in the form of Svacchandanatha, are created by Lord Shiva for the protection of the individual, but in order to receive this protection the individual must adhere to divine discipline.

This divine discipline is comprised of the five niyamas and the five yamas. You can only gain the protection of the Lord by strictly following the code of conduct set forth in these niyamas and yamas. These are:

Sauca; santosha
Tapasya;
Svadhyaya; and
Ishvara-Pranidhana

Sauca **(pronounced as Shauch)**

Sauca means clean or cleanliness. It is the essence of purity: purity of the body, mind, and speech. To keep the body clean

is essential for God Consciousness. It does not matter if your clothes are not luxurious and expensive, but the garments you wear must be spotlessly clean. The mind must also be cleaned and purified of all wretched and irreverent thoughts. If a wrong thought should intrude into your mind you must try to brush it away by thinking of righteous persons and their teachings, or about the great sages and saints who have left such a treasure of teachings. The mind should not be disturbed by a myriad of thoughts (vikalpa); it should be pure, clean, and simple.

Purity of speech means that the words you use should not excite anger or wrath in others. Speech should be used to express only that which is true, which is best, which is correct - only that which is full of absolute purity. Speech should not be used to hurl abuses at others or to give expression to language, which is disgusting or base. Your speech should be used to express words of sweetness and piety, to express that, which uplifts and never harms another.

First and foremost, make your heart pure. It is only purity that attracts divinity. If the iron fillings are rusted, even the most powerful magnet will not attract them. The iron fillings may blame the magnet, saying it has no power. But the magnet tells them, "You may think as you please, I am not bothered. Get Rid of the Rust and become pure. Only then will I attract you". In the same manner, how do you expect God to attract your mind, which is rusted with evil thoughts?

–*Sathya Sai Baba*

These three purity of body, mind, and speech - are so completely interlinked that even if one aspect of these three is followed with fervor and enthusiasm it will inevitably help in developing the other two. Together these will help push you toward the ultimate result - concentration and God Consciousness.

The fruit that accrues from maintaining cleanliness (saucha) of body, mind, and action is that you will begin to hate your body and shun contact with other bodies.

–*Patanjali Yoga Sutra 2: 40*

SANTOSHA

Santosha means contentment, real satisfaction. Contentment of course means satisfaction, agreement, being contended with what one has and being satisfied with it. If one does not gain his object in spite of effort, or succeeds to a very small extent only, and yet remains calm and does not feel troubled in his mind, he is said to have contentment. When one is surrounded by troubles on all sides, is not honoured by anyone, is talked ill of by everyone and is faced with defeat on all sides, but does not feel aggrieved by the thought that others are happy, then it is a sign of contentment[2]. Contentment is the opposite of greed, the desire and craving for more and more.

Desire obscures even the wisdom of the wise. Their relentless foe the desire is a flame that is never quenched. Intellect, mind, and senses: these combined are referred to as the seat of desire. Desire, through them, deludes and eclipses the discrimination of the embodied soul.

Craving - tanha literally, "thirst, "includes both craving and its reverse image of aversion. The Buddha identified tanha as the cause of suffering in his first sermon, the "Discourse Setting in Motion the Wheel of Dhamma" (Dhamma-cakkappavattana Sutta). In the Chain of Conditioned Arising, he explained that tanha originates as a reaction[3].

You should be satisfied with whatever you have. You must take whatever little you possess as a gift from the Lord. You must accept that gift with pleasure. The Lord knows what to give, how much should be given, and how to give it. He is the great distributor of all that we possess. Therefore, you should not think that you have too few possessions but rather you should think that what you do possess is sufficient for your needs, because the Lord knows what is best for you. You will receive only as much as you deserve according to the justice of the Lord, no more and no less. It is human weakness to think, "My life is ruined for I have not been promoted in any job", or, "I am so sad that I did not get the clothes that I wanted". Think that whatever you have is the gift of Lord Shiva and that whatever He has thought best for you He has given to you. If you think in this way you will be satisfied; you will cease craving for more and more and will enter into the

realm of peace and tranquility. Everything in this universe belongs to Lord Shiva - all wealth, all luxury, everything. He distributed in His own right way and gives to you what is best for you.

The fruit that accrues from maintaining complete contentment (Santosha) is that you attain complete peace in this lifetime.

–Patanjali Yoga Sutra 2:42

A person can be happy and content only if he wills it. Even though it may seem difficult a man can even be content and sleep peacefully on a rock.

TAPASYA

Tapasya means self-control and tolerance. It is not yielding to temptation as a glutton does to his desire for more food. It is wise advice that you should not overeat by filling yourself with excess food. You should leave your stomach slightly empty, eat slightly less. This will keep your body in form and your mind agile and alert. Otherwise you will become baggy just like a sack of food. You will waste away your time yawning and feeling sleepy. You cannot maintain the proper strength of concentration or meditation when your body is in this state.

Mahatma Gandhi has said, "This world crushes the dust under its feet, but the seeker of truth should be humbler than the dust". He should be so humble that even the dust should crush him, such should be his self-control. This self-control is real tapasya and is the essence of patience and tolerance. Without it you cannot meditate. You will only burp like a cow. By self-control, you must dissolve the dust of your mind.

The fruit acquired through practicing self-control and tolerance (tapas) is that all impurity in your body and organs will vanish and you will become filled with power.

–Patanjali Yoga Sutra

SVADHYAYA

Svadhyaya, the fourth niyama, means self-knowing. You should not waste your energies by being talkative. You should

shun frivolous talk, such as talking about social concerns, dowry matters, or the like. Wasting energy on useless and futile things is a sin. You should devote your time to Studying and reflecting upon scriptures of Kashmir Shaivism and the Bhagavad Gita. You should try to know yourself by understanding yourself.

The fruit that accrues from continuously striving for self-knowledge by constant study of the scriptures is that the Lord whom you seek (Ishtadeva) will shine before you.

–Patanjali Yoga Sutra

Whether your Lord is Shiva, Rama or Krishna, He will reveal Himself to you, either in the dreaming state or in wakefulness.

ISHVARA-PRANIDHANA

Ishvara-Pranidhana is the final and supreme niyama. It means love and devotion to God. The love of Lord Shiva creates devotion. If you love Lord Shiva and are devoted to Him, it is not possible for Him to neglect you. He will reveal Himself to you and purify you with his glorious eighteen arms. He will help you enter into the realm of God Consciousness[4].

Through devotion to Lord Shiva, mystical rapture (samadhi) is effortlessly attained[5].

–Patanjali Yoga Sutra 2:45

Love is central. Love in thought is truth that which is always the same and beyond beginning and end. Love in feeling is peace, bliss being unaffected by sorrows or joys, the ups or downs in life. Love in understanding is non-violence and respect and reverence for all creation. Love in action is morality and right living - the giving of selfless service to all in need without desire for reward[6].

Devotion is the expression of love. The emotion, which is called love, emanates from the Atma. Love is synonymous with Atma. Love has nothing at all to do with worldly feelings and secular things. Love, which is just another word for devotion, is the very name of Atma. This principle of love emanating from the core of the heart, must saturate every action, word and thought. This will happen when you think the everything you do, say or think is for the satisfaction of the Lord, alone[7].

Spiritual practice needs constant vigilance. Discipline should not be rigidly imposed, but the practitioner should learn to commit himself and accept the discipline as essential for self-growth. Direct experience is the final test of the validity of knowledge. When you have known truth directly you have the best kind of confirmation.

When you know truth directly you do not need to ask your neighbors or your teacher. You do not have to seek confirmation in books. Spiritual truth does not need an external witness. As long as you doubt, it means you have yet to know. Tread the path of direct experience until you attain that state where everything is clear, until all of your doubts are resolved. Direct experience alone has access to the source of real knowledge.

Knowledge of various paths leads you to form your won conviction. The more you know, the more you decide to learn. When you have sharpened the faculty of discrimination, you firmly tread your path without any doubts.

–*Swami Rama*

Knowing is useless without practice. Knowing is mere information. Practice gives direct experience, which alone is valid knowledge.

NEELAMAT PURAN

The Neelmat Purana contains absorbing details about the geography of Kashmir, the legend of the Satisar Lake and the creation of the Valley, the life of the Nagas and other tribes and the Saraswat Brahmins- ancestors of the Kashmiri Pandits, who were invited to Kashmir by Kashyapa Rishi. It has acquired a canonical authority for Brahminism in Kashmir, provides information on Vaishnavism, Shaivism, worship of the goddess Durga and suggests a high regard for the Buddha.

Relations among castes were harmonious. Degradation of castes and untouchability was not practised. Mobility existed amongst the castes and inter-caste marriage were routine. The status of women was high, in personal freedom and civil liberties. People were friendly and hospitable; foreigners and immigrants

were welcome. An authoritative source, the Neelmat Purana is replete with information about festivals, sacred places, pilgrimages, art and crafts, recreation, music, drama and dance. Rulers were hereditary and elected too. Mahayana Buddhism was born in Kashmir and Emperor Ashoka gave it full support. Kanishka in Kashmir held the 3rd World Buddhist Council and the doctrine was promoted by Kashmiri Brahmins and preached by them in China, Japan, Indonesia, Tibet and Central Asia where they undertook journeys on foot for the purpose. Guna Verma was outstanding in preaching the Buddha's message in Southeast Asia.

The fountainhead of Kashmir's historical past is the chronicle of Kashmir's rulers, entitled Rajatarangini: The River of Kings[8], written in Sanskrit verse in 1148-49 A.D., by Kalhana Pandit, probably born in 1100 A.D., and son of Campaka, a nobleman and minister. The Rajatarangini, in eight books, by poet endowed with the acumen of a historian, contains details of the Vedic, Brahminical and Buddhist eras of Kashmir Kalhana ardently believed:

"That a noble-minded poet alone merits praise, whose words like the sentence of a judge, is free from love or hatred, in recording the past."

The Neelmat Purana and eleven other (not extant) sources were known to Kalhana, but it is not certain to what extent he relied upon them in preparing the Rajatarangini which chronicles the ruling dynasties of Kashmir from the earliest times up to 1150 A.D. Nonetheless, it is a literary masterpiece. Kalhana did not write fiction but a history of Kashmir of which a considerable part included an account of events witnessed by him, or those written within living memory. He seemed, however, to have rushed through (Without revising his book VIII, the longest of the chronicles). His description of political and social conditions shows a high degree of credible accuracy and he did not hesitate to give facts and opinions frankly on matters relating to the rulers of the people.

It may be of interest to refer to Kalhana's opinion of his compatriots. He believed that they did not show much physical and moral courage and their timidity and bragging were apparent.

There was not much of individual or group resistance to violence and insurrection and changing of sides in a fight and treachery were known. They compared unfavourably with the foreign mercenaries employed by some rulers. In addition, the supervision and control of command mechanisms by the rulers was weak which led to loss of poor at critical times. Organised priestly power impaired the political structure and it was not mobilised to strengthen and defend the kingdoms.

The story of the search for and acquisition of a reliable and critically correct Sanskrit text of Kalhana's Rajatarangini, the oldest and fullest record of Kashmir's history, is a fascinating one. The texts must have existed with Kashmiri and Indian scholars, in Sanskrit or Sharada, since early times. But European interest was aroused probably from 1664 A.D., when traveller- scholar Bernier wrote the first account of the Kashmir Valley and showed an interest in its ancient history. Thereafter, many western scholars and researchers got involved in tracing old written manuscripts about topography, history and other aspects of Kashmir's life and its people and securing ancient, reliable texts for study. The search gathered momentum with the visit to Kashmir in 1875 of Prof. Dr. Georg Buhler (1837-1898)[9], a prominent Indologist, Sanskrit scholar and professor of Vienna University.

A codex archetypus, supposed to be recorded by Rajanaka Ratnakantha, was recognised as the best source material for the study of Kalhana's Rajatarangini. Even so, to elucidate and fully comprehend the identity of local places and dates, assistance from Kashmiri scholars was required.

One such person, Sahib Ram Koul, whom Sir Auriel Stein, linguist, explorer and scholar refers to in his book, Rajatarangini[10], as "undoubtedly the foremost amongst Kashmir's Sanskrit scholars of the last few generations", researched and abstracted in his Kashmir Tirath Sangrah (a compilation and listing of religious places) and helped him in identifying geographically important sites, religious places and establishing correct historical dates.

After his death in 1872, Sahib Ram's son, Damodar Koul, won Prof. Buhler's praise as a distinguished pandit, who enlightened and led him to the correct path, which had baffled the best pandits

of India. (Then, there was Pandit Govind Koul, to whom Stein offers a debt of gratitude for all the help received by him). Despite recognition and credit for unravelling unknown and incomprehensible aspects of Kalhana's writing by the Pandit scholars in Kashmir, more importance is arrogated in English books to Buhler and Stein.

It is worth mentioning that Maharaja Ranbir Singh had directed Sahib Ram Koul to prepare a revised version of Nilmat Purana for publication, eliminating any grammatical errors, doubtful words and substitute omissions. Sahib Ram Koul did as desired, and Buhler in his report commented: "They (corrections) prove clearly that Pandit Sahib Ram's restoration is correct in substance and that Kalhana took some portions of his narrative literally from the Purana.

There can be little doubt that the practice of eating meat has come down to the Kashmirians from the most ancient times. It prevails to a much greater extent in northern and Central India, than is generally known.

"In the Punjab, the N.W. provinces, Rajputana and in parts of Bengal, all Saiva Brahmins eat meat, and frequently drink spirituous liquor, while the Vaishnavas are strict abstainers. My Kashmirian acquaintances most solemnly denied that they took wine or other liquor. But I have my doubts on the subject.

At all events, the Nilamat Purana, which prescribes the drinking of new wine of the day when the first snow falls, and the Saiva Agamas, which frequently mention the sura-paana, show that formerly the custom did exist. A natural consequence of the practice of eating meat is that at the Varshika Sraddha, the anniversary funeral sacrifice, the pindas of offered consist of meat[11]."

There are Muslim fanatics of the Jammaat-I-Islami breed who make a pile of the looted books in the isolated corner of a lane and set it afire chanting "death to Pandit Kafirs." A few more cunning among them harness the services of Kashmiri Pandit hostages staying back in the valley and dispatch them to Jammu and other metropolises to mobilise the sale of old manuscripts in

Sharda script at a lucrative price. The horoscopes looted from Kashmiri Pandit houses are also a saleable item with the looters.

An officer in the state government, a litterateur by all standards, at the time of "office move" from Jammu to Srinagar way back in 1992, was shocked and dismayed to learn about the sale of the looted books at a particular shop in a downtown locality. Camouflaging his real identity he made a foray into the Muslim den and succeeded in locating the shop. While accosting to the Muslim shopkeeper putting on a well-cut beard he was plainly informed that he had been selling books looted from the houses of Pandit Kafirs who had fled the land thus rendering a damage to the on-going movement.

On enquiry he was told that he himself had been looting books from the Pandit houses and then he had contacts who have been pursuing it as a profession at the behest of respectable Muslims. "Who are the persons at whose behest they pursue it as a profession" asked the officer. "That I cannot tell", was the reply. Ultimately the officer was led into the interior of the shop where he purchased 5 kgs of books for fifty rupees. When back home he was surprised and vexed to find that the books he had purchased included Stein's Rajtarangini and two volumes of Nilmat Puran. On perusal he discovered that all the books he had fetched home bore the signatures of the Pandits who had purchased them with the moneys that they had earned with the sweat of their brow. For the officer it was a shock, but for the Muslim looter it was a religious act as he was vending off booty legitimized by the Textual injunctions[12].

Puranas a collection of sacred Hindu texts contain cosmology and genealogies of gods, sages, and rulers; Old traditions partly historical but mostly legendary narration. They contain discussions on religion and philosophy. The long stories in them are meant to explain certain religious views on principles. The principal Puranas are 18 in number. They are told by Sutra and listened to by 88 thousand sages in Nemisharanya. The traditional definition of Puranas is a book dealing with creation, recreation, and genealogies of sages and history of rulers.

An episode regarding the Philanthropic personality of Maharshi Kashyap, a legendary figure, and his act of welfare of

all is related to Kashmir valley - enriched and embellished by nature.

According to Neelamat Purana (a mythological text) there existed a vast lake in the area where the Kashmir valley is located at present. It is widely believed that Maharshi Kashyap, in order to create an outlet for the water of the lake, did a Herculean task by cutting the mountain near Varahmul, now known as Baramula. The water of the lake flowed in the river Vitasta (Jhelam) and as a result of that, gradually, the bottom of the lake was transformed into a beautiful and fascinating valley with small lakes here and there. The valley such formed was named as Kashyap Marg by the people, which are now popularly known as Kashmir. The Maurya Emperor Ashok, the great, built Srinagar, the present capital of Kashmir.

According to the known history, even before the period of Mahabharat and during the Mahabharat as well, Kashmir had been a prominent seat of Vedic dharma. Later on, it became also famous as an important centre of Shaivism.

Traditionally, Kashmir has always been a votary of liberal and in conservative conventions and rites and thereby against obsolete and outdated ones. It is the land where at the end of the Dwaper age, the king having been assassinated in the war and the crown prince being minor, Lord Krishna prevailed upon the Purohits (priests) to enthrone the widow queen Yashovati[13]. In Kashmir, Mahayana, a Buddhism, emerged and began to blossom effectively as a liberal faith. Kanishka a Kushan emperor, established a centre of the Mahayana Buddhism at Kanishkapur (kanspur) near Baramula and several Bauddha Vihars as well. During his regime a grand Bauddha conference was also held in Kashmir[14].

SHAIVA TANTRISM

The rise of Shaiva Absolutism is described in a legend prevalent in Kashmir and is referred to by Somananda in his Shiva-drishti and by Abhinavagupta in his Tantraloka. Somananda affirms that the secrets of the Shaiva tradition in earlier times existed in the "mouths of the rishis", and with the advent of the kali yuga they were concealed and were difficult to obtain. The

legend goes that Lord Shiva, out of grace, incarnated in the form of Srikantha and instructed the sage Durvasa to salvage the Shaiva teachings. Durvasa produced a mental son, Tryambaka, and transmitted the Shaiva wisdom to him. Then Tryambaka began to propagate the system.

While practicing the Tantric yoga meant for Self-realization, the Sadhaka automatically acquires some psychic powers, but Tantra does not permit them to be used for evil purposes. There are certain Tantric sadhanas that are specifically aimed at achieving psychic powers meant to be used for good purposes. Lest such sadhanas fall into the hands of impostors and miscreants and be abused by them, the Tantric gurus have tried their best to keep them concealed. They revealed the secrets of the psychic sadhana only to deserving disciples, and they chose and accepted the disciples themselves after due scrutiny.

Although utmost care was taken in safeguarding the psychic sadhana from undeserving persons, the sadhana might have slipped into the wrong hands, as the safeguarding measures could not be one-hundred percent foolproof. Hence, in the course of tantric history we find the misuse of technological power by the wrong people. However, the general Tantric sadhana, or the Tantric way of life, is safe and harmless and is also completely open and public.

The literal meaning of "Sadhana" is the effort you make to achieve the object you desire or to reach the goal you have in view. Sadhana is thus the primary means to realise your aim or objective. A second meaning of the term "Saa-dhana", is, the wealth that is associated divinity. "Dhana" is described in three ways. "Aiswarya", "Sampada" and "dhana" (material wealth). All of them refer to the same thing. If this wealth is lost, it can be got back. Hence while life still remains, one must strive to acquire the divine wealth that is imperishable and everlasting. Your conduct constitutes this divine wealth. It is only by the way we live that we can acquire this divine wealth.

The removal of (vasanas deep-seated tendencies) impurities, which have encased themselves so deeply, is the principal objective of all Sadhanas or spiritual practice. This is also the goal of all

Yoga, namely to cleanse ourselves of all traces of Raga and Dvesha, the twin evils of attachments and hatred, which have harboured themselves inside us[15].

True sadhana-Spiritual practice consists in the technique of merging the Vaak-faculty of speech - in the mind, the mind in the intellect and finally the intellect in the Atma[16].

The ancient sages, after deep enquiry have indicated five different paths for achieving this objective. These are:

Sathyavathi, Angavathi, Anyavathi, Nidanavathi and Swarupaathmaka-jnaanam.

Sathyavathi is a kind of Sadhana. This sadhana reveals the presence of the Divine in a subtle form everywhere, in everything, in the same manner in which butter is present in milk. The sadhana provides the proof for the view that God is the universal indweller abiding in all beings. No one should think that God dwells in a particular place or in a particular being. The purpose of this Sadhana is to make one realise that God is present in all beings and to act on that conviction.

Angavathi sathana , there are five elements in a specific form. In space (Aakash) the Divine is present in the form of sound as "Om". Aakash is the base and the form of Pranava ("OM") issues for the from Aakasha. Air (Vayu) has the power to sustain .life. Hydrogen and oxygen in the atmosphere represent this power. Oxygen has this divine life-sustaining potency. The divine is thus present in the air in the form of life-giving breath (prana). This is a matter of daily experience for everyone.

CONCLUSION

There are many scriptures relating to Kashmir and Kashmir Shaivism. The Rajatarangini of Kalhana is mainly a history of kings of Kashmiri Valley.

The other scriptures are proper treatises on religion and spirituality like tantras and Purans. However, there is reliance on basic Hindu scriptures like Vedas and Darshans. Sankhyya system & Yoga Shastra are of importance. The very fact that references have been made to the mouths of Shiva or to different Vaaks show

that there is esoteric teachings also which must be transmitted by word of mouth or orally, thus needing self Realised Guru or Master.

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9

Bodhapanchadashika, The Fifteen Wisdom Verses

INTRODUCTION

Man has harnessed rivers. Scaled peaks. Can fly. Walk on the moon. But he is still not contented, happy and satisfied. Is anxious. Remains perturbed. Undergoes strain and stress. Toils. Still remains in turmoil. All kinds of problems confront him.

Man looks for stress-busters. Seeks love and affection from animals, "dogs and pets heal humans in hospitals", is the essence of a recent report on medicine. Resorts to drugs. Takes tranquilizers. The effort prove ineffective. Strong spirits fail to raise the modern man's spirit.

Discipline the mind. Dispel the desires. Get rid of despair and disappointment. Forget the unfounded fears. Give up the greed. You will have no cause to grieve. Live in the present. Enjoy every moment of it. Do not ruin it by worrying about the uncertain future.

Pratyabhijna is not knowledge by description but knowledge by acquaintance. It is the direct awareness or cognition of the Self. It can also be called illumination (bodha or jnana). Brahmajnana is not mere verbal knowledge but an actual experience (anubhava or anubhuti). Pratyabhijna is called bodha or jnana ("knowledge") because it is an awakening, enlightenment, or rising to a higher level of awareness or consciousness.

Kashmir Shaivism is an idealistic system that admits of no physical or material reality. Consciousness is the only reality; the reality of the world is epistemic or ideal (abhasa). There is therefore no physical or material transformation; all transformation is epistemic or mental, just as the change from the dream state to the waking state is an epistemic change. In the pasu state one has forgotten oneself, just as one forgets oneself in a dream. Ignorance is a kind of primordial forgetfulness of one's real nature, and pratabhijna therefore is a kind of remembrance of the same.

Pratyabhijna is certainly different from ordinary knowledge. It is the immediate knowledge of the Self. In Pratyabhijna one knows oneself as the all-pervasive perfect Self (purnaham or Shiva) Shiva, a god in cyclic existence.[1]

Bodhapanchadashika "Fifteen Verses of Wisdom" by Abhinavagupta, the great master of all aspects of Kashmir Shaivism are not only the verses of Wisdom but also provide brief exposition, and captures the essence, of the doctrine of Kashmir Shaivism.

Instantaneous enlightenment is possible from olden times down to the present day, all who were ever enlightened, became simultaneously enlightened. However, in order to become enlightened, it is not possible to rely upon the worldly knowledge of either men or gods. Whilst the Buddha lived there were various stupid and crazy persons who worked for enlightenment by various means and later found the True Way to freeing themselves from delusions as a result of true faith[2]. According to Abhinavgupta, instantaneous enlightenment is possible and therefore he has given out Bodhapanchadashika "Fifteen Verses of Wisdom", to enable his disciples to have instantaneous enlightenment.

Sukumaramatinsisya nprabodhayitumanjasa
Eme'nbhinavaguptena slokah panchadasoditah

Abhinavagupta says that he has written Bodhapanchadashika "Fifteen Verses of Wisdom" and revealed these verses for some of his dear disciples who have very little intellectual understanding. For those disciples, who are deeply devoted to him he has composed these fifteen verses just to elevate them instantaneously.

Om anastamitabharupa-stejasam tamasamapi
Ya eko'ntaryadantascha tejamsi ca tamamsi ca (1)

Om: "hail." Often used as an invocation of a mantra or dharani and also as a mantra by itself. It originally came from Hinduism. Om is also the sound called Om Dhwani which can actually be heard in meditation.

Amitabha: Fathomless Light

Tamas: Darkness, The rig Veda says, "Burn away from us the sin, flame out on us the bliss. When the fire is kindled we speak indeed the truth". Agni dispels darkness or tamas that fills the world. Spiritual yearning of the ancient Hindus is evident when they prayed to Agni, for discriminating between virtue and vice.

Agni strides forth in his golden chariot drawn by red horses. Wild fires blow away burning fragments that set off spot fires miles away. This particular aspect of Agni can be seen in the modern times.

The Vedic bard appeals, "Grant, brilliant Agni, happiness to our sons and grandsons to ourselves". Fire is the intermediary between people and gods and receives oblations from the humans. It sends up to the skies whatever is burnt at the altar. Judicious use of the energy of fire is the key to human progress[3].

The constant awareness that 'I am That' Is the lamp's most brilliant flame. When the bliss of self realisation sheds its bright lustre the delusion of duality, the root of worldly existence is dispelled. The deep darkness of lost moha and tamas, the whole family of powerful avidya, disappears. When the light of self-realisation is gained thus, the intellect rests in the chamber of the heart, untying the knot of ignorance. If that knot of ignorance is untied, Then the jivatma is fulfilled.

–*Ramacharitamanas*

Tejas: unbounded

The brilliance of the One Being's light does not vanish in external light or in darkness because all light and darkness resides in the supreme light of God Consciousness[4].

–*Abhinavagupta*

According to Kashmir Shaivism most of the enlightened people who have shown light to others have themselves attained light by their own efforts without the light's being shown to them from some other source.

Light can shine from within oneself can come both from without and from within. History shows that there have been enlightened persons who were self-enlightened. They attained enlightenment by themselves without any substantial help from an external guru. Buddha, Christ, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Ramana Maharshi, Sri Aurobindo - all attained enlightenment by themselves. In Tantrism, the guru is of the utmost importance. But still, Tantrism does not rule out the possibility of self-enlightenment. In fact the real guru is within oneself. It is one's own higher Self. The external Guru helps in recognizing this inner guru. The Buddha used to say, "be yourself your lamp" (attadiobhava or atmadipo Bhava), "make yourself your shelter" (attasarana or atmasaranah), "do not take shelter in others" (nanyasaranah).

Buddha's last words to his disciples were: be a light unto yourself. And you can be a light unto yourself; when you go beyond the body, the mind, the heart. Find the center of your being and suddenly there is light. It is already there, it is already burning bright.

Appa deepo bhava - be a light unto yourself. While departing Buddha said, I was not your light, you have to be your own light.

Shine forth like a lamp
On your path be a light

–Ravindra Nath Tagore

The Brightness of a candle is out shined by the Shining sun but the radiance of that One Being's brightness is not outshine by external Shine or overshadowed by darkness. This is because all external light and darkness reside in the Supreme Light of Consciousness.

The self-consciousness of Shiva, or pure Self, is a significant point in Kashmir Shaivism. The Kriya principle explains the self-

consciousness in the absolutely non-dual self. Self-consciousness is an activity of Consciousness, something like an eternal rippling in the ocean of consciousness. And this is possible even when the non-dual Self alone exists. This natural effulgence or vibration (spanda) of Consciousness makes it aware of Itself.

Self-consciousness, (aham-vimarsa), is the first and foremost activity (kriya or spanda) of consciousness. It is the very nature of consciousness, or Shiva, and therefore it is eternal (nitya), whereas the triad of will-knowledge-action (iccha-jnana-kriya), which pertains to the creation of the world, is the free manifestation of Shiva. Self-consciousness is the natural activity of Consciousness just as self-illumination is the very nature of light[5].

Sa eva sarvabhutanam svabhavah paramesvarah
Bhavajatam hi tasaiva saktirisvaratamayi (2)

Sarvabhutanam: All beings, a technical term, denoting the totality of all elements of the Universe including the Absolute.

Svabhava: "own-being" or "own-nature"; it is the svabhava that dharmas are said to be lacking and which contribute to their being empty (sunyata). If a thing had "own-being," it would exist in itself, thus being outside dependent origination, and contradict Buddhist orthodoxy[6].

Para: The creative ground in the Indian tradition was beyond mind and speech and called para, the highest state which excelled all description.

Parameshvara: The Supreme Lord.

Bhava: Being, existence, becoming.

This being is called Lord Shiva. He is the nature and existence of all beings. The external objective world is the expansion of His Energy and it is filled with the glamour of the glory of God Consciousness[7].

–Abhinavagupta

One being of infinite light is called Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva is at once benign and dreadful; auspicious and terrible. The third of the great gods of the Hindu Triad, Shiva is, originally believed

to be the personification of destruction. To destroy is practically to recreate, and Death stands at the gates of life. Hence the name given to the agent of destruction is Shiva, "the propitious" or "the Good". He is the power which destroys and regenerates the Cosmos after its destruction and constantly destroys and regenerates during cosmic activity.

Shiva is most deadly, ruthless and uncompromising - like time. The Linga Purana says: "Obeisance to the one who represents the past, present and future. Obeisance to the ebullient and virile, to the heroic and unconquered, the bestower of boons and to the best of persons of great soul, obeisance to 'mahat', the first evaluates of Prakriti in all three stages: past, present and future; obeisance to one without fear". Since he is the Master of Time, ipso facto he rules age and hence destiny too. In this Character he is also called Mahamritunjaya' or the victor of death.

Time has three division as far as man is immediately concerned; as are expressed in the structure of his language. The three tenses: past, present and future, are real to mankind, but in divine terms they are fragments of One Time called Mahakala - this being one of the names of Shiva, for in him they are all united. In the Kurma Purana, he is described as "the antidote for those who suffer in this worldly life (samsara), the Lord who is the soul of Kala (Time), the slayer of Kala. He is Time: past, present and future". That he rules age and destiny is a natural corollary to his being the ruler of time. It is not time but the Ruler of it that can alter or change its course. So, he is Mritunjaya, Mahakala or Mahakaleshwar.

His this character appears logical if one considers his other role - the Distracter. What destructs age is time and since he is the Ruler of Time, he is automatically the Ruler of Destruction. Kal - Time is under his control[8].

Pratyabhijna is the knowledge or realisation of the Cosmic "I" or Shivahood. It follows then that pratyabhijna is virtually the dissolution of the ego. Ego is the consciousness of the individual "I" as different or separate from others. It confines one to a particular body and mind and is thus the principle of differentiation and limitation. It can easily be seen that the ego stands as an obstruction to Shiva-realisation.

In fact the ego is the greatest obstruction. Shiva is the all-pervasive Self that is in perfect unity with all. Ego is just the opposite.

Ego keeps one confined to a particular Individuality. As long as the ego persists, one cannot realize one's Shivahood. It is only when one breaks out of the ego shell that one becomes one with the all-pervasive Self. The wave cannot become one with the ocean unless it surrenders its individuality. Egolessness does not mean the disappearance of the Self; it only means the disappearance of the limited form of individuality that the Self has adopted.

Hence even an attempt to understand the basic approach to Egolessness is a necessary endeavour for a Buddhist. This means a step taken towards less attachment and renunciation - may be in a distant future birth, prelude to the uphill task towards the goal. For if one were to possess a 'self' Nibbana will be impossible as expressed in the Buddha word. "If there existed such an Ego, that is permanent, enduring and lasting and not subject to any change, then holy life leading to complete extinction of suffering will not be possible.

The highest virtue of all men, by which the Lord (the Soul of the universe) is pleased, has been duly proclaimed, as consisting of the thirty features, out of which one is egolessness:

Pondering the contrary result of men's (egotistic) actions[9].

When the wave surrenders its individuality, what is lost is not water but the particular form and name that the water had adopted. The wave becomes the ocean. In fact, the wave was already one with the ocean; its wavehood was accidental. Once the accidental state is removed, the wave attains its real nature, which is ocean. Similarly the individual shakes off its limited finite individuality and becomes the infinite Shiva.

The self is already Shiva, its individuality being an adopted covering that, once gone, allows the Self to shine in the pristine purity of its Shivahood. Therefore there is no question of committing suicide. What appears to be self-immolation is really self-enrichment or self-fulfillment.

The ego limits Consciousness to one particular individuality and thereby cuts it off from the rest of the world. This produces the "self" with a small "s". But when the Self feels its unity with all, then the smaller self becomes the bigger Self and the ego is virtually gone[10].

Saktisca saktimadrupa vyatirekam na vancchati
Tadatmyanayornityam vahnidahikayoriva (3)

Shakti: Power, force, the divine power. Energy; Force; Will; Power; Conscious-Force; Soul-Force; the self-existent, self-cognitive, self-effective power of the Lord which expresses itself in the workings of prakriti[11].

Na vancchati: Not aware

Shiva and Shakti are not aware that they are separate. They are interconnected just as fire is one with heat[12].

–Abhinavagupta

Solar science is one of the highest of the advanced yoga sciences, which can help humanity today by eliminating suffering. It involves a particular type of meditation on the solar plexus, and is very beneficial for removing all obstacles created by physical and mental diseases. The solar system is the largest network in the human body, and its center is called manipura chakra. There are various ways of meditating on this chakra, but by including advanced pranayama, solar science brings forward an awareness of a level of energy finer than the pranic level. At this level the energy rhythms are studied by meditating either on the morning sun or on udaragni, which is the internal center of fire[13]. This healing science, though described in the Upanishads and known about by scholars, is understood in a practical way by very few. By learning this science one can have absolute control over his three sheaths - physical, pranic, and mental. One who is adept in such knowledge can communicate and heal anyone, regardless of the distance between them.

In advanced practices the student learns how to concentrate on different parts of Sri Yantra, and a few rare students learn to travel to the center. This yantra is considered to be a manifestation

of divine power, and the bindu, or point in the center, is the center where Shakti and Shiva are united.

In this worship of the Divine Mother the final knowledge imparted by the great sages is found. For this knowledge a scriptural study is essential, but most essential is the direct guidance of a master who is adept in this vidya. There are very few people who know this, and they can be counted on the fingertips. Our tradition alone teaches this vidya. If anyone is accomplished in this, then he is from our tradition.

Shiva and Shakti are not two realities or even two parts of one reality - the relation between the two is that of identity. As to the question of why, then, we use two separate words Shiva and Shakti, which suggests that there are two. The words connote two characteristics of one reality, but denote one and the same reality. Shiva is conceived of as dynamic, and the very dynamism of Shiva is called Shakti.

The term Shiva - Shakti - Samarasya used to denote the unity of Shiva and Shakti, does not imply that Shiva and Shakti are two existing in harmony. The reality denoted by the two terms is one and the same, whether it is called Shiva or Shakti.

Shiva and Shakti, and this world, are not are separate. The state of Lord Shiva and the universe are one and the same, just as the fire and heat. Heat is not separate from fire: fire in essence is heat.

Sa eva bhairavo devo jagadbharanalaksanah
Svatmadarse samagram hi yacchaktya pratibimbitam (4)

Bhairava: Shiva is God Bhairava

Devo: God Shiva

Pratibimb: reflection

He is the God Bhairva. He creates, protects, destroys, conceals, and reveals His nature through the cycle of this world. This whole universe is created by God in His own nature, just as one finds the reflection of the world in a mirror[14].

–*Abhinavagupta*

Shiva, of diverse nature, is at once pacific and fierce. He personifies the disintegration forces of the cosmos, death and destruction, and the malignant forces of nature. Not only is Shiva auspicious, he is the Great Lord - Maheshvara: the Great God - Mahadeva; Lord of Universe - Jageshvara; the Great God Mahadeva; Lord and indeed, he has more than a thousand names that define his multiple aspects.

At times Shiva is a benign god who plays an ordinary role of loving husband and doting father intent on the pleasures of family life. Yet he is atonce nataraja, the cosmic dancer, to whose thunderous rhythms the world's tremble. He is also Yogeshvara, the arch Yogi, he is ash-smeared and with matted locks. And, again, he is Demon Lord–Bhuteshvara or the terrible one- Bhairava; gruesome and fearful to behold, a god to be placated with blood and alcohol than adored with flowers and vermilion. Shiva's cognizances - weapons, dress, ornaments, signs, and gestures are many. Symbols of Shiva are the trident - trishula, the double-headed drum damru; the ascetics rosary - rudraksamala and water pot - kamandlu-tumbi; and tiger-skin, loin cloth and serpent ornament, a complement that varies in accordance with a given manifestation.

Kashmir Shaivism is the culmination of the Tantric tradition, or is the central philosophy of Tantrism. The Tantra advocates three metaphysical position - difference (bheda) unity-in-difference (bhedabheda), and unity (abheda). Technically, the bheda corpus is called Shiva Agma, the bheda texts fall under the rubric of the Bhairava Agama.

In the tradition in general, and the Tantric tradition in particular, it is maintained that the same sadhana, or path, may not be suited to all persons, because all people are not at the same spiritual level; there is a hierarchy of stages of spiritual evolution. Therefore, different paths may be prescribed for different levels of competence. As far as the result is concerned, there is no difference; all of them lead to the attainment of Shiva-consciousness.

The world of difference, according to the Kashmir Saivite, is the manifestation of unity (Brahman or Shiva); unity is not the manifestation of difference. This means that unity (Shiva or

Brahman) stands independent, by itself, and is therefore higher, or truer, than difference (the world), which depends upon unity. To use an analogy, the waves are included in the ocean; the ocean is not included in the waves. We can say that difference is grounded in unity like the waves in the ocean, for difference is the manifestation of unity. We cannot say that unity belongs to difference or is grounded in difference. The philosophy of unity can include the philosophy of duality within itself, but the reverse is not true[15].

In the ordinary worldly course, sound is reflected outwardly in ether and inwardly in the ear. Touch is reflected outwardly in air and inwardly in the skin. Form is reflected outwardly in fire and in a mirror and inwardly in the eye. Taste is reflected outwardly in water and inwardly in the tongue. Smell is reflected outwardly in the earth and inwardly in the nose. These reflections, however, are just like the reflection in a mirror. They only take place individually. All five reflections are not available at once. Only one thing is reflected in a mirror, it nor can taste, smell, or sound. A mirror will only reflect form. It is only in supreme god Consciousness that you find all five reflected at once. In fact, although these reflections are experienced individually in all of the organs, sight in the eye, sound in the ear, etc., these reflections could not even be observed if consciousness was not there. Awareness is needed and this is found in consciousness and not in the organs.

The universe, therefore, is reflected in the mirror of consciousness, not in the organs nor in the five gross elements these are merely tattvas and can not reflect anything. The real reflector is consciousness. In consciousness, however, you see only the reflected thing and not anything that is reflected. That which is reflected (bimba) is in fact svatantrya. This whole universe is the reflection in God Consciousness of svatantrya[16].

There is no additional class of similar objects existing outside this world that he reflects in His nature. The outside element, that which is reflected, is only svatantrya. The infinite variety, which is created, is only the expansion of svatantrya.

In the ordinary worldly course the reflected object (bimba) seems to be the cause of the reflection (pratimbimba) because the reflected object cannot exist without that which is reflected. We have seen, however, that all reflected object is really the cause of the reflection then what kind of cause is it? Is it the material cause, which travels with the effect, or is it the formal cause, which does not travel with the effect? It cannot be the material cause because that would mean that there is something outside of God Consciousness, which travels to become part of the effect, which is the reflection. Yet, it is theory in Shaivism that nothing can exist outside God Consciousness.

The cosmic reflection of consciousness on Maya controls Maya and all individual entities of the universe. The universe is not a product of chance. It is destined to undergo evolution in a certain ways; it is destined to undergo involution in the reverse way. It appears from Maya; it stays and evolves; it is absorbed into Maya.

Time (kala) is eternal and ubiquitous in the system. It is the substratum of motion. It is the cause of changes and modifications. It is the eternal background of the creative processes. It is the cause of things that are produced. It is regarded as the efficient cause of everything in the world. The origination, maintenance and destruction of all objects of the world are done by it.

In the Sankhya system of evolution, space (akasha) is an evolute. It is a modification (vikrti) of Prakriti (Nature). Being a product, it cannot be eternal. In the involution process, all the evolutes of Prakriti are reabsorbed into Prakriti, which becomes a single, homogeneous entity[17]. According to the idealistic Kashmir Shaivism system, there is no physical reality or matter; there is only consciousness (Chitti or Samvit).

There cannot, therefore, be any agency which is separate from God Consciousness and which travels with the cause because if it is separate from God Consciousness and therefore from the effect it would not exist. There is nothing, therefore, which is outside to be reflected in the mirror of God Consciousness. There is only the mirror. There is no external cause which has gone into the reflection which is the effect. There is only the mirror of God Consciousness.

The cause of this reflection is svatantrya, the absolutely independent will of God. Svatantrya is the mirror. It is the cause of this effect, the reflection. Unlike ordinary reflection which we experience in the world wherein an object can be distinguished which is the cause of that reflection, in God Consciousness only the reflection exists and not anything that is separate and reflected (bimba). In this causality, the effect of which is the reflection, svatantrya is the formal cause (nimittakarana) not the material cause (upadanakarana). It does not travel from the cause into the effect because, there is no cause which could be separate from God Consciousness. It is His free will that He wills and what He wills, appears in the mirror of His Consciousness. It is simply His will (svatantrya). In reality only the reflection exists and not anything that is reflected.

The atoms of the universe may be counted, but not so my manifestations; for eternally I create innumerable worlds.

–*Srimad Bhagavatam*

This universe, therefore, is found in the reflector of God Consciousness, not through the agency of anything of which it is a reflection (bimba) but through His svatantrya where the universe is contained in a seed form. Svatantrya is the seed of everything. Everything exists in the mirror of God Consciousness with svatantrya as its cause[18]. Swami Lakshman Jee, further elaborates:

"The theory of reflection (pratibimbavada) is meant for advanced yogins. This theory teaches them how to be aware in their daily activities, while talking, while walking, while tasting, while touching, while hearing, while smelling. While they are doing all of these various actions they see that all of these actions move in their Supreme Consciousness. Their vision, their perception, heretofore limited becomes unlimited. The mode of their actions becomes absolutely unique. They see each and every action in their God Consciousness. They exist in the state of sadashiva. Each and every action of their life becomes glorious. This is the awareness that comes from the practice of pratibimba".

Lord Shiva creates universe in His own nature. The Shiva protects and gives strength to the universe. The universe and the

universe holder, i.e. the creator of universe the universe its holder, its creator are one and the same. This universe is a pratibimba - reflection of Lord Shiva, who is God Bhairava. Lord Shiva creates the whole universe in the mirror of His own nature.

tasyaivaisa para devi svarupamarsanotsuka
purnatvam sarvabhavesu yasya nalpam na cadhikam (5)

Svarupa: the true entity

The collective state of the universe is His supreme Energy (shakti), which he created in order to recognize His own nature. This Shakti, who is the embodiment of the collective state of the universe, loves possessing the state of God Consciousness. She is in the state of ignorance, remaining perfectly complete and full in each and every object[19].

–Abhinavagupta

This entire universe is in the glory of God Shiva, the God of Love.

–Svetasvatara Upanishad

One can recognize Lord Shiva through the universe, not by abandoning it, but by observing and experiencing God Consciousness in the very activity of the world.

According to the 'Steady State' the universe remains the same at all times - past, present and future. Matter in the form of stars, galaxies and other bodies is uniformly distributed all over the universe. New matter is created to fill any gap that arises due to the expansion of a galaxy or other bodies.

The God of Love - Dancing Shiva is the symbol of life unfolding, of recreating itself, partly destroying itself in order to create de novo; and in the ecology age signifies establishing new relationships with all creation. Dancing Shiva in our age signifies a transition to ecological consciousness. Dancing Shiva in our times signifies ecological ethics based on reverence, frugality and justice for all signifying ecological values. Ecological values signify the ecological mind in action. As our values are extended to the sacred, we witness the process of greening of all religions - our God becomes an ecological guardian of all creation[20].

Kashmir Shaivism believes that undoing the knots of ignorance and internal contradictions is God's blessing to us. This explains in significant measure the power of restraint of mental and sensual traits in helping us fathom the depths of happiness by drowning in it the self-created dilemmas of life.

Lord Shiva creates the external universe with a view to His own nature. As such the external universe is called Shakti.

Esa devo'naya devya nityam kridarasotsukuh
Vicitransristisamhara nvidhatte yugapadvibhuh (6)

Vichitran: Diversified, variegated

Yugapad: Simultaneously creates era

The Supreme Lord Shiva, who is all-pervasive and fond of playing and falling together with the Energy of His own nature simultaneously brings about the varieties of creation and destruction[21].

–Abhinavagupta

The concept of tandava as symbol of cosmic dance is very old in Indian mythology and philosophy. The *Rigveda* describes, in categorical terms, the vigorous dance of the particles on the stage of the cosmic field. The Brahma-Sutra speaks of the cosmic vibration. The Upanishadic description of the Prana corresponds to the unified field of the quantum-physicists.

The cosmic dance of the quantum physicist and the tandava dance of the Hindu god Rudra-Shiva may be correlated here. Banerji writes about this dancing god as follows:

Shiva's dance is tandava, energetic and virile... The damaru or drum in his upper right hand stands for creative sound, the fire in the upper left hand for destruction, the 'pataka' hand which depicts the pose of Abhaya Mudra is for boon, peace, content and maintenance. The foot held aloft gives release. The cosmic process of creation and destruction, manifestation and non-manifestation, the worldly evolution and change are fundamentals in Hindu theology and Shiva's dance is the depiction of the same.

Carl Sagan has given a description of the symbolic significance of the tenth-century Chola bronze sculpture of India

as under: "In his manifestation as Lord of the Dance, the Hindu god Shiva dances the dance of creation. In this tenth-century Chola bronze Shiva's aureole of fire (the prabhamandala) represents the rhythm of the universe and emanates from a lotus pedestal, the Hindu symbol of enlightenment. Shiva dances on the prostrate form of the Apasmarapurusa, a symbol of human ignorance. The back right hand carries the damaru, a small drum symbolizing creation. The back left hand holds Agni, the fire of destruction. The front left hand is in the gajahasta ("elephant trunk") position. The front right hand is held in the abhaya-mudra pose (literally, "do not be afraid").

The words 'Shiva and 'Shankara' mean 'auspicious' or 'one whose actions are good'. Thus the deity Shiva is auspicious and benevolent. He is worshipped in the form of phallus that symbolises the 'divine Father'. The phallus symbol penetrates into Shakti (Energy) which is symbolized as the generative organ of the 'Divine Mother'. Shiva is a fertility god. His dancing symbolizes creation. But the same shiva is Rudra. The word 'rudra' means 'ferocious', 'one with terrorizing cry'. Rudra's actions are destructive. He dances for the annihilation of everything. Thus Shiva and Rudra are two concepts that are antagonistic to each other and are mutually exclusive. Notwithstanding the contradictory aspects of these two words, the Hindus bring about a fusion of two contradictory concepts to synthesize an integral concept of Rudra-Shiva. Such a concept is apparently paradoxical. But, in reality, this is a bipolar concept, in which both the opposite poles are indispensable to each other and one cannot exist without the other.

Many scholars recognize one and only one God who is formless. This one God is conceived in many forms. As a coin has two faces, so also one single god has three phases with reference to actions and attribute of rajas (mode of activity) and is responsible for the creation of the universe. Vishnu possesses the attribute of sattva (mode of purity) and is responsible for the sustenance of the universe. Maheshvara or the Great Controller possesses the attribute of tamas (mode of inertia) and is responsible for the dissolution of the universe.

According to the Trinity concept Maheshvara or Rudra-Shiva is destructive in nature. If this is a fact, we find difficulty

in associating creative activity with Rudra-Shiva. But the Nataraja concept contains mixture of creative, destructive and supporting activities[22].

Shiva, the third person of the Hindu Triad is god of destruction. In Vedas he was a subordinate deity, but in the Purana, he has thrown Agni, Surya, Mitra, Vayu and Varuna completely into the shade. Indra was the most important deity in the Vedas but in Purana he came down to occupy subordinate position and became unable to compete in power with Rudra (Shiva) and Vishnu. Shiva's destruction is followed by immediate creation, hence the name Shiva-the happy one. This may be one of the reasons for his worship in the form of Linga the sign of procreation.

Shiva is the destroyer and is declared as the Rudra of the Vedas. Rudra is supposed to be born of Agni, living as a householder and the Usha, the dawn as his wife. The fire always produces unpleasant sound. Therefore, Rudra was supposed to weep (rud means to weep) and hence the name Rudra.

In the Vedas also, the form of Shiva is mentioned as a terrible god, associated with spirit. Since he is a destroyer and as per Hindu Mythology, death is not death in the sense of passing into non-existence but, simply a change into a new form of life, so the destroyer is really a recreator[23].

The Vedic poets as divided into the three domains of earth, air or atmosphere, and heaven regard the Universe, the stage on which the actions of the gods are enacted. The sky when regarded as the whole space above the earth, forms with the latter, the entire universe consisting of the upper and the ether world.

Terror and gloom are conspicuously absent from the feelings aroused in Indian mind by its religion, art or literature. In the religion they are rarely awakened and only in order to be immediately healed and, even when they come, are always sustained by the sense of a supporting and helping presence, an eternal greatness and calm or love or delight behind; the very goddess of destruction is at the same time the compassionate and loving Mother; the austere Maheshwara, Rudra, is also Shiva, the Auspicious, Ashutosha, the refuge of men.

Shiva is the God of the perpetual dance of creation. Shiva devours, transforms, re-creates; is the eternal symbol of the fluidity of the world. Shiva is the god of becoming, the god of catharsis. Of cleansing, of purifying; of making new things out of the dust of destruction. Shiva is a central symbol of re-birth, re-awakening, healing and re-emergence.

Shiva awoken to our dilemmas is the ecological Shiva. The eternal dance of Shiva becomes the dance of healing - of the planet and of ourselves, becomes the dance of purifying our rivers, our mountains and our bodies, becomes the dance of purging our atmosphere of pollutants and our minds of mental pollution, becomes a wholesome reconstruction of our fatigued and decaying culture by infusing it with a new creative substance and energy.

atidurghatakaritva masyanuttamameva yat
etadeva svatantratva-maisvaryam bodharupata (7)

Svatantratva: Shiva's Independence, glory, intelligence

Mahesvaryam: An epithet of Siva, one of the three major Hindu deities, along with Brahma and Vishnu. The creator of the world, who lives in Akanishtha heaven[24].

This supreme action cannot be accomplished by any other power in this universe except Lord Shiva, who is completely independent, perfectly glorious and intelligent[25].

–*Abhinavagupta*

God has masked his own nature because there is too much ecstasy, but that ecstasy, in reality, cannot be disconnected at all. The Lord knows that, but still for His own amusement He temporarily disconnects it. Then, at the time when he again realizes His own nature, He feels that the ecstasy was already there. This kind of action can not be accomplished by any power in this universe other than Lord Shiva.

The God is the source of the universe and of all things, one of the numerous forms is Shiva who evolved from the fierce Vedic God Rudra. Shiva has ferocious and dangerous side to his character. Shiva's character is ambivalent.

Shiva means bright or happy one and auspicious but in practice, he visits battlefields, burning grounds and lurks in horrible places, which are very much inauspicious. Shiva has bizarre tastes and wears garland of skulls and is surrounded by demons, ghosts and evil spirits. He is death and time and thus destroyer of everything. Himself a great ascetic, he practised severe penance and became patron of deity of ascetics. As a great yogi, he sits on a tiger skin on the high slopes of the Himalayan Mount Kailash and through his deep meditation, the world is maintained.

There is a legend which describes unity of various deities. Once Lakshmi and Durga were sitting together in presence of Shiva. Lakshmi contended that Vishnu is greater than Shiva because Shiva worshipped him. When they were arguing, Vishnu appeared himself and to prove that he and Shiva were equal, entered Shiva's body and they became one.

As per Skanda Purana, on one occasion, Shiva asked Vishnu to become a beautiful woman, as he did to attract the attention of asuras, whilst gods drank amrita during churning of the ocean. When Vishnu assumed the form of a beautiful woman, Shiva embraced her over excited. Vishnu ran away but Shiva followed him when Vishnu resumed his proper form but Shiva clasped him so strongly that their bodies were united half woman, half man. This deity was given the name Harihara (Hari being title of Vishnu and Hara of Shiva). Cult of Harihara developed in middle ages and Harihara temples were patronised by Vijaya Nagara Kings in the south where this god is still worshipped.

The famous "Tandav Nritya", Shiva's dance, is nothing but eternal vibratory phenomenon of the physical world. As mentioned in Hindu Shastras, when Shiva performs "Tandav Nritya", the whole universe vibrates in tune.

Shiva is represented in human form in minute details but he is universally worshipped in another form of the Linga. It is intended to represent male and female reproductive organs. According to Padma Purana, Bhrigu, son of Brahma and a sage, was entrusted with the task of finding which of the three gods (Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh or Shiva) was the greatest. He came to Shiva's abode but was not allowed to meet him immediately

as Shiva was busy with Devi, his wife. Bhrigu waited for sometime, but became impatient and exhausted. Out of anger he cursed and said that he treated me with contempt in preferring the embraces of Parvati, so his forms of worship shall be Linga and Yoni.

According to Vamana Purana when Sati died at the Daksha's sacrifice, Shiva fell into great distress and wandered from one place to other as a mad person. He visited many hermitages for peace but could not get it and remained in pathetic conditions. Finding Shiva in such state, many of the hermits' wives fell in love with him and out of sympathy and affinity accompanied him from place to place. Observing such a behaviour of their wives, hermits cursed the god and deprived him of his manhood. Followed by great concern, Brahma and Vishnu intervened on Shiva' s behalf. Subsequently hermits consented to withdraw their curse on the condition that the offender should be represented by the Linga which became an object of worship by men and gods as Shivalinga.

Shiva is supposed to possess a third eye situated in the middle of his forehead. This is a peculiar eye which, when opened, releases enormous energy and destroys things at sight. According to the Mahabharata, Shiva was engaged in austerities in the Himalayas when Uma with her companions dressed as ascetic came behind him and playfully put her hands over his eyes. Suddenly darkness prevailed and the world became lifeless and destitute of oblations. The gloom was transient. Bundle of flames emanated from Mahadeva's forehead, in which a third eye having luminosity of the Sun, was formed. The heat and the fire out of this eye consumed everything on the mountain. Fearing further damage, Uma stood in submission before her husband and then only the Himalaya, her father was restored to his former condition.

Shiva is known as a great god of mystical stillness, but he is a great dancer and lord of dance (Natraja). In South India he is worshipped in temples where dance is a great part of celebration. Shiva has invented more than 108 types of dances, some calm and gentle, others fierce, terrible and orgiastic. Tandava dance is the most famous of all in which the angry god surrounded by chain of drunken attendants, beats out a wild rhythm in which world is destroyed at the end of the cosmic cycle.

Pushpadanta's Mahima Stotra eloquently describes the effects of Shiva's cosmic dance, with the god's matted hair striking terror in the hearts of the wicked and imparting joy to the bhakta. In a well-known form of the cosmic dance, the Pradosha dance, Shiva dances at twilight in Parvati's presence to alleviate the suffering of his devotees.

"None is smaller than me; and none is greater than a Shivasharana (devotee of Shiva)"

–Basaveshwara

The stone steps leading to the Chittasabha, the sanctum sanctorum, are five in number and are said to represent the five mystic letters of the Panchakshara Mantra 'Na Ma Si Va Ya', and Vyaghrapada and Patanjali figure as dvarapalas or doorkeepers. Venerated by sages and mystics down the ages, the Shiva-Nataraja temple has also been closely associated with the four great Shaivite acharyas, Appar, Sambandhar, Sundarar and Manikkavachakar.

paricchinnaprakasatvam jadasya kila laksanam
jadadivilaksano bodho yato na parimiyate (8)

jadasya: insentient being

Vilakshano: absolutely different

Bodha: Wisdom, intelligence, knowledge

The limited state of Consciousness is insentient and cannot simultaneously expand itself to become the various forms of the universe. The possessor of independence is absolutely different from that insentiment state of consciousness. You cannot, therefore, recognize Him in only one way. The moment you recognize Him in one way you also recognize Him in the other way[26].

–Abhinavagupta

Whose name shall we hold sacred?
Who is that all glorious resplendent Being.
Who is imperishable among all the perishable things,
Who having made us enjoy the bliss of emancipation, again invests us with bodies and thereby gives us the pleasure of seeing our parents.

It is all-glorious, eternal, immortal, all pervading Supreme Being, whose name we should hold sacred.

He, it is, who helps us to enjoy the bliss of emancipation, and then brings us back into this world, clothes us with bodies; the same Divine spirit it is, who regulates the period of emancipation and is Lord over all[27].

–Rig Veda

Evamasya svatantrasya nijasaktyupabhedinah
Svatmagah sristisamharah svarupatvena samsthitah (9)

Svatantrasya: Shiva's independence

Sristisamharah: creation and destruction

This Lord Shiva, who is completely independent (svatantra), has the diversity of creation and destruction existing in His own nature. And, at the same time, this diversity is found existing in its own way as the field of ignorance[28].

–Abhinavagupta

Lord Buddha believed that it was basically a state of avidya which hindered beings from realising their destiny. Ignorance or avidya is the foulest stain. The Anguttara Nikaya says, "beginningless is the process of samsara; the origin of beings revolving in samsara, being cloaked by avidya, cannot be discovered." Like the Buddhists, the great philosopher Bergson also said that no object in the whole universe can be isolated from other objects and known as 'a thing in itself.' So all knowledge is comparative or relative. Hence things can have no real existence or self existence: 'Sarve Dharmah anatma.

"But worst of all stains is the stain of Ignorance. O Bhikkhus! Wipe off that stain and become stainless."

Ignorance is a vice that no one need permit himself, for it does not even carry with it the advantages of a transient pleasure as do so many other vices; in fact, it has nothing at all to commend it. Knowledge of whatever sort brings with it certain benefits; material knowledge brings material benefits, spiritual knowledge brings spiritual benefits.

According to socrates, all wrong doing is based on ignorance. He maintained that we only do what is wrong because we think it is right and will be beneficial to us.

Tesu vaicitryamatyantam urdhvadhastiryageva yat
Bhuvanani tadamsasca sukhaduhkhamatirbhavah (10)

Sukha: Pleasure.

Dukkha: Sorrow, grief

Matribhavah: Mother's attitude

In this world, you will find varieties of creation and destruction, some of which are created, in the upper cycle, some of which are created below, and some of which are even created sideways. Attached to these worlds, smaller portions of worlds are created. Pain, pleasure, and intellectual power, are created according to the status of being. This is the world[29].

–Abhinavagupta

Closing the eyes consciously is a part of meditation. A yogi closes his eyes and withdraws his senses from the sense perceptions. He remains free from the pair of opposites of pain and pleasure. Closing the eyes is for him the opening of the inner eye.

It is no slight benefit to a Brahmin when he holds his mind back from the pleasures of life. Wherever the wish to injure desists, even there is cessation of suffering[30].

–Dhammapada verse (390)

It is through suffering that humans can get close to God. The virtue of suffering is treated with great respect in all religions. We live in predominantly consumption-oriented societies where the emphasis is more on self-fulfilment than self-denial. Suffering for the sake of others and making others suffer are two diametrically opposite tendencies; whilst one brings us closer to God the other takes us away from his divine presence.

Him I call a Brahmana, who does not cling to sensual pleasures, just as water does not cling to a lotus leaf, or the mustard seed to the tip of an awl.

–Dhammapada verse (401)

Him I call indeed a Brahmana who does not cling to pleasures, like water on a lotus leaf, like a mustard seed on the point of a needle[31].

As water does not cling to the lotus leaf or a mustard seed to an awl point, the Brahmin does not cling to pleasure[32].

yadetasyaparijnanam tatsvatantryam hi varnitam
Sa eva khalu samsaro jadanam yo vibhisakah (11)

Parijnanam: spiritual knowledge

Samsaro: worldly life, is a vast ocean.

If you do not understand that there is actually no span of time, this misunderstanding is also the independence (svatantrya) of Lord Shiva. This misunderstanding results in worldly existence (samsara), and those who are ignorant are terrified by worldly existence[33].

–Abhinavagupta

The universe is unreal (mithya) for a non-dualist. Advaita Vedanta is as follows: "Brahman is real; the universe is an illusion, and jive (individual self) is verily Brahman, not other than Brahman (Brahma satyam jaganmithya, jivo brahmaiva naparah)".

The Sanskrit word 'sat' means 'existent', and 'asat means 'non-existent'. 'Asat' is contradictory to 'sat' ; but 'mithya' is contrary to 'sat'. Strictly speaking, the universe is not asat or non-existent, but is mithya. It has got a dependent existence. It appears to exist on the substratum of Brahman. It is not eternal and timeless.

The universe has got origin; it has also got termination. Time starts with the origin of the universe; time ends with the dissolution of the universe. Space is born with the origin of the universe; it expands; then it contracts; finally it is dissolved with the dissolution of the universe. Such a universe that has got origin, sustenance and termination, that is not eternal and timeless, is called mithya.

The whole universe is an object (vishaya); every entity of the universe is an object. Every object possesses attributes. These

attributes are ever-changing. We cognize the object by virtue of its actions and manifestations, of its attributes. The cognizer (vishayi) is the self or consciousness. There is no way of ascertaining whether the cognitions are 'as they really are'. If a is cognized as A and never as not - A, the cognition is correct. There can never be such a correct cognition of the phenomenal world. And hence the world is mithya[34].

"Life is a movement of the Eternal in time".

–Sri Aurobindo

To sum up in a classic statement by Sri Aurobindo, "All life here is a stage in an unfolding progressive evolution of a spirit that has involved itself in matter and is labouring to manifest itself in that reluctant substance. This is the whole secret of earthly existence".

tatprasadarasadeva gurvagamata eva va
sastradva paramesasya yasmat kasmadupagatam (12)

Sastradva: scriptures

When, because the grace of Lord Shiva is showered upon you, or due to the teachings or vibrating force of your Master, or through understanding the scriptures concerned with Supreme Shiva, you attain the real knowledge of reality, that is the existent state of Lord Shiva, and that is final liberation[35].

–Abhinavagupta

Panchakrityavidhih, the five great acts of Lord Shiva are srishti, the creative act, sthiti, the protective act, samhara, the destructive act, tirodhana, the act of enfolding or concealing His nature, anugraha, the act of unfolding or revealing His nature. Swami Lakshman Joo, the Great master of the oral tradition in Kashmir Shaivism, explains:

In the Kingdom of spirituality, Lord Shiva creates masters and disciples through His fifth act, the act of grace (anugraha). This grace is nine fold and, therefore, he creates Masters and disciples in nine different ways.

The first and highest level of grace is called tivrativra shaktipata. Tivrativra shaktipata means 'Super Supreme Grace'. Transmission of spiritual power (shakti) from Guru to disciple; spiritual awakening. When Lord Shiva bestows on anyone super supreme grace, then that person becomes perfectly self recognized. He knows his real nature completely and in perfection. At the same time, however, his body can not resist this kind of intense grace and he throws away his body and is dead. This person becomes a Master, however he accomplishes the act of his mastery secretly in the deserved hearts of disciples. He is not visible in this world. Only those that are deserving experience his subtle existence.

The second intensity of grace is called tivramadhya-shaktipata. This is 'Supreme Medium Grace'. The effect of this grace of Lord Shiva is that the recipient becomes completely and perfectly illumined, but he does not leave his body. He is said to be a pratibha guru, that is, a master who is made not by another master through that Master's initiation but by his self, by his own grace. He experiences spontaneous enlightenment. These particular masters live in this world with their physical bodies for the upliftment of mankind.

The third intensity of grace is called tivramandasaktipata which means 'Inferior Supreme Grace'. In him, who has received this grace, the desire appears for going to the feet of a spiritual Master. And the master that he finds, has received the second intensity of grace, tivramadhyashaktipata. This Master is perfect. He is all knowing. There is no difference between this Master and Shiva. This Master does not initiate him, rather, he simply touches him with his divine hand, or gazes upon him, or embraces him, and at that very moment this disciple who is a recipient of medium supreme grace perfectly transcends individuality and enters into that supreme transcendental state without the need of practicing japa (recitation) or dhyana (contemplation), etc. Although he still experiences pleasure and pain in his physical body it does not effect him as his being has become supreme.

That master who has received this particular intensity of grace which is known as Rudra Shakti-samavesah is called Rudra shakti-samavistah because he has completely entered into the trance of Rudra Shakti, the energy of Shiva. He exhibits five signs

which can be observed by others. The first sign is his intense love for Lord Shiva. The second sign is that whenever he recites any mantra the devata (deity) of that mantra appears to him at once without his having to wait. This is called mantrasiddhih[36]. A group of mantras sacred to Lord Shiva which secure his protection is armour of Lord Shiva. The third sign which can be observed is that he has control over the five elements. The fourth sign is that whatever work he begins he completes that work without defect. And the fifth sign is that either he is a master of all the scriptures or he becomes a great poet.

Lord Shiva, through these three supreme intensities of grace, creates Master in the kingdom of spirituality. With less intensities of grace Lord Shiva creates worthy disciples.

The fourth intensity of grace is called madhyativara shaktipata. This is 'Medium Supreme Grace'. Through the effect of this intensity of grace, the disciple reaches the feet of that master who is absolutely perfect. But because the foundation established in the mind of this disciple is not quite completely perfect, the mere touch or glance of this perfect master will not bring this disciple to enlightenment. He, therefore, initiates this disciple in the proper fashion by giving him a mantra and teaching him the proper way of treading. Through this initiation this disciple becomes enlightened, however, he is not completely satisfied with this enlightenment during the period of the existence of his physical body. At the time of his death though, when he leaves his physical body, he obtains completely satisfactory results from the earlier initiation he had received and becomes one with Shiva.

The fifth intensity of grace is called madhyamadhya Shaktipata, which means 'Medium Middle Grace'. When Lord Shiva bestows this particular intensity of grace upon someone the intense desire for achieving the existence of Lord Shiva arises in this person's mind. At the same time, however, he does not want to ignore the enjoyments and pleasures of the world. He wants to enjoy worldly pleasure along with wanting to realise the existence of Lord Shiva. Yet the intensity of his desire is only for achieving Lord Shiva's state. So, although he is initiated by a Master and realizes his Real nature as Lord Shiva, his Real Self, and enjoys the bliss of that state while remaining in his physical body,

simultaneously he also enjoys the pleasures of the physical body. Simultaneously he also enjoys the pleasures of the world. But as these worldly pleasures, which take place in this mortal field of the universe, are not real pleasures, therefore, at the time of His leaving his physical body, he enters into the Kingdom of Paradise (svargaloka) and enjoys all the worldly pleasures to his entire satisfaction. After he had satisfied his desire for worldly pleasures, he does not come down again into this world but is again initiated by his master, who is all pervading, while he remains in heaven. Through this initiation he becomes complete and realizes the reality of his Supreme Nature and from heaven itself he enters into the Kingdom of Lord Shiva and merges in Him completely.

The sixth intensity of grace is called Madhyamanda Shaktipata which means 'Medium inferior Grace'. The effect of this grace is very much like the effect of Medium Middle Grace, however, the difference lies in predominance. The effect of Medium Middle Grace is that in the mind of the disciple arises both the desire for attaining the State of Lord Shiva and the desire for experiencing worldly pleasures, however, the predominant desire is for attaining the State of Lord Shiva. The effect of Medium Inferior Grace is also that in the mind of this disciple arises both the desire for attaining the State of Lord Shiva and the desire for experiencing worldly pleasures, however, the predominant desire here is for experiencing worldly pleasures. So, at the time of his leaving his physical body, this intensity of grace carries him from this mortal world first to paradise where he enjoys the pleasures of the world. While in paradise, however, he does not gain the fitness to begin practicing for attaining the realization of his Self. He must, therefore, be again reborn and come down into this mortal field. And from that very birth he sentences his mind toward the fulfilment of his Self-realization. Although his life in this mortal realm is very short as Lord Shiva wants to carry him quickly to His own State, yet he becomes absolutely complete in that short span of Time and enters, in the end, into the Transcendental state of Shiva.

The three inferior intensities of grace, mandativra (Inferior Supreme), manda madhya (Inferior Medium), and manda manda (Inferior Inferior), take place in the field of aspirants living in the kingdom of lokadharmah, the kingdom of worldly life. These

aspirants have the desire for achieving the state of Lord Shiva, Self-realisation, only when the pains and pressures of this world become too much to bear. At that moment, they want to abandon everything and achieve self-Realisation, however, they are not able to and though they want to leave this worldly life, they can not leave. These aspirants have more tendency for worldly pleasure and less tendency for realizing their Self. But, as the grace of Lord Shiva shines in them, in the end, which may take many lifetimes, they become one with the Supreme Being. This is the greatness of Lord Shiva's grace that in no matter what intensity His grace is with you and it will carry you in the end to His Nature.

yattattvasa parijnanam sa moksah paramesata
tatpurnatvam prabuddhanam jivanmuktisca sa smrita (13)

Moksha: Liberation. Liberation is not attainable by penance, sacrificial rituals and hundreds of fasts. Living beings attain liberation when they realize, "I am Brahma"[37].

–Shivopadesha

Mukti: The word mukti (liberation is derived from the root verb muc plus the suffix ktin. Mukti means "means of removal", that is, "the fundamental wherewithal for the removal of bondages".

The attainment of the wisdom of the Nirvana, the fullness is achieved by elevated souls and is called liberation in this life (Jivanmukti)[38].

–Abhinavagupta

Nirvana is the ultimate goal of every Buddhist intellectual (as opposed to the peasants in Buddhist countries for whom pure philosophy is of little value), it is the voluntary transition of a Buddha, i.e. a person who has come to bodhi, enlightenment, by means of moksha, liberation, from all illusions and desires. Nirvana is a psychological conditions which a monk who has become arhat, may attain, even in this life. It is a state in which the individual has no wishes left so that, by definition, he has achieved complete happiness . The state of Nirvana is achieved by a Jivanmukta.

Etau bandhavimoksau ca paramesasvarupatah
Na bhidyete na bhedohi tattvatah paramesvare (14)

These two cycles, bondage and liberation, are the play of Lord Shiva and nothing else. They are not separate from Lord Shiva because differentiated states have not risen at all. In reality, nothing has happened to Lord Shiva[40].

–Abhinavagupta

The bondage - ignorance and liberation - enlightenment are the two cycles. The bondage is concerned with not knowing and liberation exists when one comes to understand the play of Lord Shiva in which nothing has happened nothing has lost and nothing has been gained.

The world has a beginning, a life-time and an end. This process is repeated. In the original manifestation, the universe emanates from Maya and after the great world period (mahakalpa), it goes back to Maya.[41]

Maya, the external energy of the Supreme Lord, which covers the conditioned soul and does not allow him to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead;

The delusory power inherent in the structure of creation, by which the one appears as many. Maya is the principle of relativity, inversion, contrast, duality, oppositional states; the "Satan" (lit., in Hebrew, "the adversary") of the old Testament prophets; and the "devil" whom Jesus described picturesquely as a "murderer" and a "liar", because "there is no truth in him" .

"The Sanskrit word maya means 'the measurer', it is the magical power in creation by which limitations and divisions are apparently present in the Immeasurable and Inseparable. Maya is Nature herself - the phenomenal worlds, ever in transitional flux as antithesis to divine Immutability.

–Paramahansa Yogananda

Avidya means individual ignorance, while maya is both individual and cosmic illusion. Ma means "no" and ya means "that"; that which is not self-existent, yet appears to exist, like a mirage, is called maya. Maya is universal illusion and also the mother of the universe in tantra philosophy, maya is considered to be both cosmic Shakti and the primal force, or kundalini - the latent force in all human beings. By focusing one's awareness on

the Absolute, this sleeping force is awakened within and directed towards the center of consciousness. When one comes in touch with this power, he can easily attain the highest level of consciousness. Those who do not awaken this force of Shakti, remain forever brute and ignorant.

When we devote our mind, energy, and resources to believing in that which is non-existent, then it appears to exist, and that is maya[42].

Itthamicchakalajnana saktisulambujasritah
Bhairavah sarvabhavanam svabhavah parisilyate (15)

Kalajnana: Knowledge about time

Svabhavah: Selfhood (Svabhava) denotes a self-sufficient and self-subsistent entity; it suggests qualities of independence, determinates, and indivisibility.

In this way the Lord, Bhairava, the essence of all being, has held in his own way in His own nature, the three great energies: the energy of will (iccha-shakti), the energy of action (kriya-Shakti), and the energy of Knowledge (Jnana-Shakti). These three energies are just like that trident which is the three-fold lotus. And seated on this lotus is Lord Bhairva, who is the nature of the whole universe of 118 worlds[43].

–Abhinavagupta

The triad of iccha-jnana-kriya describes the process of creation. Iccha means the will to create. When Shiva desires to create the world, or manifest Himself in the form of the world, this is iccha. Iccha is the first spark (camatkara) of the creational activity in Shiva. In the case of Shiva, Iccha is not like ordinary volition in which we have to exert our will or make an effort; iccha in Shiva arises spontaneously and effortless (anayasa).

After the will to create the world arises in the mind of Shiva, the next step is that of the ideation bodha - jnana of the world. The full mental picture of what is to be created comes to the mind of Shiva. Since in this stage the world remains an idea or mental image in Shiva, it is called jnana. In this case jnana does not mean awareness, or illumination, that is the nature of Consciousness. It means idea or ideation. Since an idea in the mind is nothing but jnana, it is called jnana.

The word jnana in Sanskrit is derived from the root verb jna plus the suffix anat. The same root verb, jna, was changed into keno in old Latin. The root verb "know" in modern English is the transformation of the Old Latin keno. Because the letter "K" was in Keno, the letter "k" has been retained in the spelling of "know" although it is not pronounced in modern English[44].

After the mental picture bodha - jnana of the would-be created world becomes complete in the mind of Shiva, the next step is that of externally projecting the world as appearance (abhasa). This is called kriya, which means the external activity of creation. In the case of ordinary creation, such as the creation of a pot by a potter, the creation is a physical or material one. But in the case of Shiva, there is no material creation; the world is created or projected as a reflection, or abhasa ("appearance"), like the reflection in a mirror. Since the reflection in a mirror is not just an idea (jnana) of the mind but an actual appearance (abhasa) outside the mind, it can be called external or even physical. Thus, Kriya is the externalization or physicalization of the idea (jnana). Kriya in this sense does not mean the vimarsa that is the nature of prakasha or Shiva; it means a particular step in creation, the last step - external projection.

Iccha, Jnana, and kriya are the three hierarchical steps of creation, which are found in any kind of creation. In the creation of the universe, too, the Lord first wills to create (iccha); then the entire picture of the would-be universe clearly forms in Shiva-consciousness as ideation (jnana); finally the Lord actually creates the universe by bringing it into visible existence (kriya).

The terms jnana and kriya are not used here in the general sense of illumination and dynamism (prakasa and vimarsa), which are the connotations of Shiva and Shakti. They are used here in the special sense of steps of creation. When anything to be created forms as an idea in the mind, it is jnana, and when it is actually created as an external reality, it is kirya. Jnana is the internal or mental creation of anything; kriya is the external or physical creation of the same.[45]

Kriya yoga literally means integration of action. Kriya yoga was essentially a technique to subdue the working of the mind. Thoughts by nature are discontinuous, but the mind creates an

illusion of continuity. This misconception is the root of ego, the "I". Kriya yoga is a process of healing the dichotomy in the human personality and developing tranquility of mind, which is its natural state. This unitive state can be experienced through practice of this yoga and even an occasional glimpse is sufficient to reorient one's life there is no duality in the unitive state of mind; but at the empirical level, it will continue to exist.

Kashmir Shaivism, a universal philosophy focuses on relation between God, Nature and Man, which transcends all the barriers of time, place and diverse human-cultures. It leads to the highest level of self-realisation revealing the innermost secrets of the nature of Self. It integrates all the aspects of life, which are taken in totality. Thus, rather than negation and denial, it celebrates life. Kashmir Shaivism is the only school of Indian philosophy, which can inspires for both material and spiritual progress. Besides making valuable contribution to the Indian culture, it is the highest spiritual philosophy discovered and expressed in the world.

The philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism occupies a distinguished position among the various schools of religious creed and thought. It provides the complete analysis of human personality and delves into the deepest and most comprehensive psychology of man. In this way, it makes the greatest contribution to furthering of human understanding.

Look at the marvellous variety in Creation. No one thing is the same as another; no one person resembles another. This can only be the "lila" or sport of the Phenomenon with limitless glory; God Shiva. Anyone can understand that no lesser power could be the source. On the basis of the mystery that inheres Creation one can easily infer the Almighty power that has created it. Those who are incapable of unravelling the mystery of the Created, can never unravel the nature of the Creator.

Creation is projection of the Divine will. It is called Prakriti (nature). The way this creation or Nature is functioning, is amazing beyond words. For instance, the carbondioxide exhaled by man is being taken up by the plants and oxygen released by the plants is being inhaled by man. Nature has made this mutually beneficial arrangement Poet-saints like Purandardas have sung the praise of the Lord Almighty in the following terms: "Who has watered,

manured and grown the small shrubs and the gigantic trees in the crevices of the rock in the mountains? Who has painted the beautiful peacock and its tail with such attractive colours? Who has designed the wonderful combination of a green body and a red beak for a parrot[46]. Lord Shiva is found in rocks; he is found everywhere and in everyone.

CONCLUSION

In Kashmir Shaivism Abhinavagupta provides the thread of unity among the different sub-trends of the school - namely, the Krama, Kaula, Spanda, and Pratyabhijna branches.

Abhinavagupta picks up the concept of Pratyabhijna and successfully uses it as a thread to weave into one single garland of the different flowers of the sub-trends of Kashmir Shaivism. For Abhinavagupta Pratyabhijna becomes the philosophy in which all the other forms are organically incorporated.

The key concept of Kashmir Shaivism is kriya, or spanda, which means free and spontaneous activity. Kriya is different from karma, which is effortful voluntary action that is suggestive of imperfection and bondage; karma produces karma mala, which is one of the spiritual impurities. Kriya, or spanda, is the freedom (svatantrya) of the Self or Consciousness.

The Self exhibits its freedom even at the pasu level, although in a limited form. The self at the pasu level, which has only limited freedom, can attain its potential freedom in fullness through sadhana. Emphasis on the freedom (svatantrya) of the Self is a unique feature of Kashmir Shaivism.

It is the kriya principle, the natural dynamism in the Self, that makes self-consciousness possible even in the ultimate non-dual Consciousness, Shiva. In Kashmir Shaivism, Kriya is the logic of self-consciousness. The Self, or Consciousness, devoid of self-consciousness is no better than insentient matter (jada).

The central problem of Kashmir Shaivism is that of Self-recognition (Pratyabhijna), around which the entire philosophy and religion of the system move. Kriya is the key concept, and pratyabhijna is the key problem. The problem starts with the question, who am I and how am I related to the world?

By breaking through the surface self with the help of sadhana, one reaches one's deeper Self, which is Shiva; and then one realizes that nature, or the world, is not "other". One realizes one's unity with all beings; Self-realization naturally carries the sense of unity (advaita-bhavana).

Abhasavada, the theory of the world as appearance that forms the cosmology of Kashmir Shaivism, clearly recognizes the truth that appearance (abhasa) as appearance, or as the process of self-projection, is real. In the case of appearance, the real material object that is posed by the appearance is false and the appearance itself is not false, just as the reflection in a mirror cannot be rejected as reflection; it can be rejected only as a real object, just as a cinema-projection as projection is very real.

The world as appearance is not a superimposition on Shiva like the rope-snake but is the self-projection of Shiva like that of a magician or a yogin. This means that Shiva is actively involved in Creation and does not lie neutral and inactive. The world appearance (jagadabhasa) is a free manifestation or free spontaneous activity (kriya or spanda) of Shiva. Shiva is not obliged to create or project the world out of Himself, when he creates or projects. He does so out of freedom, or freely out of joy (ananda). Thus Abhasavada fits perfectly with Svatantryavada. The ultimate consciousness, Shiva, has not only "freedom- from" but also "freedom-to" - the freedom to act or appear as he likes.

Creation is a sportive activity (lila) or dance of Shiva, as creation is a free manifestation out of the bliss of Shiva. The presence of evil in the world is not due to Shiva Himself but to humankind; people deliberately exercise their free will in favour of the abuse or misuse of their powers.

Shiva is the God of the perpetual dance of creation. Shiva devours, transforms, re-creates; is the eternal symbol of the fluidity of the world. Shiva is the God of becoming, the God of catharsis, of cleansing, of purifying; of making new things out of the dust of destruction. Shiva is a central symbol of re-birth, re-awakening, healing and re-emergence.

Shiva awoken to our dilemmas, is the ecological Shiva. The eternal dance of Shiva now becomes the dance of healing - of the

planet and of ourselves, becomes the dance of purifying our rivers, our mountains and our bodies, becomes the dance of purging our atmosphere of pollutants and our minds of mental pollution, becomes a wholesale reconstruction of our fatigued and decaying culture by infusing it with a new creative substance and energy.

The symbol of the Dancing Shiva is a great metaphor for the dance. Salute him as the same God of creation and transformation. A new dance of Shiva is one of the ecological catharsis, of the healing of Mother Earth, of infusing our perception with reverence for all living beings, of increasing our understanding and sensitivity for the wholeness of creation, for connectedness and interdependence of all things.

Shiva is not going to dance alone. Rather it is going to lead whole of the universe to a new dance. God or Gods cannot do anything for us, if we do not help them. God can lead and inspire us. The work has to be done by us. This is the secret or creative life. In its quintessential meaning, God is the symbolic focus of our innermost high energy[17].

Man, although substantially one with Shiva, is functionally and existentially different. Shiva has introduced the cosmic game of Creation in which the individual souls take part as players. But the individual souls are not like robots; they have free will. They deliberately choose, out of their free will, to violate the rules of the game. They hit the heads of their co-players instead of hitting the ball. Shiva of course punishes them for such violations.

Abhinavagupta has also introduced into this grand game a law of punishment in the form of the Law of Karma.

It is theoretically possible therefore, that the world play could become absolutely free of evil if the players - the souls or pasus - chose not to violate the rules of the game. Just because there is the violation of the rules of the game on the part of the individual players out of their own free will, and the subsequent punishment of this violation in the form of suffering, this does not mean that the world is not a sport, or that it does not arise out of the bliss of Shiva.

In Kashmir Shaivism the emphasis is on practical sadhana; philosophy is meant for life. Abhinavagupta, in his Tantraloka, has categorized and classified all the sadhanas.

Kashmir Shaivism has given three hierarchical categories of sadhanas, or ways, technically called upayas; all the possible means for spiritual realization can be classified under one or the other of the three upayas–anavopaya, shaktopaya, and sambhavopaya[48].

Anavopaya, or kriyopaya, includes all physical and external forms of worship and sadhana. Shaktopaya, or jnanopaya, comprises all the mental forms of sadhana, such as meditation. Sambhavopaya, or icchopaya, contains all the spiritual sadhanas such as surrender of the ego, realization of universal unity, and universal love.

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10

Bodhayana's Brahmasutra

In ancient time, Kashmir was not only the centre of Shaivism but also of other philosophies including vaishnavism. There have been saints in all cult-traditions of Hinduism. Shaivism and Vaishnavism are the two major Hindu cults. Just as in Southern Shaivism a distinction is made between samaya-acharyas (religious teachers) and santana-acharyas (Philosophical expounders), so in the Vaishanavism of the South a distinction is made between Alvars and Acharyas. The Acharyas were philosophers as well as saints. It is to this class of Acharyas the defenders of the Vaishnava faith that Ramanuja belongs. Although there were Vaishnava teachers before him, such as Nathamuni and Alavandar, the credit for consolidating and systematically expounding the philosophy of Southern Vaishnavism known as Visishtadvaita goes to Ramanuja. According to T.M.P. Mahadevan, Ramanuja visited Kashmir and succeeded in procuring a manuscript copy of Bodhyana-vritti, a commentary on Brahmasutra by Bodhayana.

Ramanuja's fame as a great teacher began to spread. Several disciples joined him; Kuresha (Kurattalvan or Srivatsanka Mishra) was the chief among them. He had to meet in debate one Yajnamurti, an Advaita scholar, and defeat him. As it usually happens in such cases, Yajnamurti joined Ramanuja's fold and became his disciple.

Ramanuja started on a pilgrimage, from Rameshvaram to Badarinath. He travelled up by the west coast and returned by the east coast. While at Srinagar, in Kashmir, he was able to procure a manuscript copy of the Bodhayana-vritti, a commentary

on the Brahmasutra by Bodhyana. His faithful disciple, Kuresa, was able to memorize it even at the first reading. Closely following the Bodhayana-vritti, Ramanuja wrote his own commentary, which is known as the Sri-bhasya. We are told that the Goddess of learning, Sarasvati, herself gave her approval of the bhasya and conferred on Ramanuja the title of 'Bhasyakara'. Thus was fulfilled the main desire of Alavandar - the writing of an authoritative and illuminating commentary on the Brahma-sutra[1].

Ramanuja, born at Shriperumbudar in 1017 AD was a great religious preceptor, philosopher and profounder of a particular system of metaphysics, called Vishishtadvaitavada. He worshipped the god Vishnu to whom he built many temples and mathas during his lifetime. The catholic spirit of his religion made it possible for him to acquire a large number of devoted scholars, who carried on his religion and philosophy for centuries to come. Ramanuja died in 1137.

Ramanuja was the founder of the school known as Vishisht, advaita Vedanta (qualified non-dualism) in Indian philosophy, Ramanuja's philosophy is a creative and constructive effort to systematise the teachings of the Upanishads, the Gita, and the Brahmasutras.

The Brahma Sutra opens with the capsule, athato brahma jijnasa - "and now, curiosity for Brahman". Brahman is being; it is that out of which the world came into being, as set out in the next, second capsule: janmadyasya yatah.

The Brahma Sutra is the orderly and capsulised presentation of Upanishadic revelations. Brahma jijnasa is the jumping off point for Upanishadic thoughts. The Upanishad asks, "have you ever listened to the instruction by which the unheard is heard, the unthought is thought, and the unknown is known?" And it adds, "Just as all earthen wares are known by just knowing a lump of clay - because change in the shape of a thing is just change in words; only the lump of clay is real".

A pot, pitcher, a vase - these are changes in names; the basic stuff is the same - a lump of clay. What is the 'lump of clay' that the world is made of? Curiosity for that lump of clay is brahma

jijnasa. On the topic of "Potter's clay", the greatest Bhakti Movement, Indian Saint, sant Kabir, says:

> God first created light
> All men are born out of it.
> The whole world came out of a single spark;
> Who is good and who is bad?
>
> The creator is in the creation
> And the creation in the creator,
> He is everywhere the clay is the same,
> The potter fashions various models,
> There is nothing wrong with the clay or the potter.
>
> God the true resides in all,
> Whatever happens is His doing,
> He who surrenders to Him gets to know Him.
> He is His slave.
>
> God is invisible, He cannot be seen.
> The Guru has granted me this sweet gift.
> Says Kabir, my doubts are dispelled,
> I have seen the Pure with my own eyes.
>
> –***Kabir***

Brahma Jijnasa is the loftiest passion of the human soul. It is the drive behind all search for knowledge and truth. It is the motor of all spiritualism. The Rig Veda asks, "Of what use is this *rik* to one who does not get brahman by it?" The Brihadaranyaka declares, "He who takes brahmindhood as something other than striving for the Self, him brahminhood rejects".

Brahma Jijnsa was the initial motive of all religions and philosophies. But they failed to keep its flame alive as they allowed themselves to be masks for man's baser instincts and passions. There is an eternal and inescapable psychological truth, and it is that the motive of all of man's thoughts and actions is inflating his ego. Religions and philosophies fell prey to this psychological 'wolf' and lost the flame of Brahma Jijnasa.

It was when Brahma Jijnasa was dead and gone in religion and philosophy that modern science was born. The supreme

virtue of science is that, unlike religion and philosophy, it cannot be made an instrument for inflating the egos of individuals, races and countries. It is truly and supremely impersonal and international. Religions and philosophies have their loyalties to keep to for one or the other group psyche; science owes its loyalty only to pure Brahma Jijnasa. Today Brahma Jijnasa is a flame only in science. Einstein said:

The most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the sower of all true science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms - this knowledge, this feeling, is at the centre of true religiousness".

Science's brahma Jijnasa is getting consummated in the knowledge of Janmadyasya yatah. By looking into the distance in space it is looking into the past and its look has almost reached the birthday, nay, the birth moment, of the universe. K.M. Gupta, in "Alpha and Omega of the Universe", asserts:

"NASA's COBE spacecraft, which made more than 300 million measurements and detected the ripples of matter scattered at the time of the 'Big Bang', is said to have deciphered the holy grail of cosmology. The Hubble telescope is another man made machine like COBE, which can take us very close almost to the moment of the birth of the universe itself, probably to the very beginning of time. Our technical prowess is enabling us to observe and calculate the alpha and omega of the universe. NASA's latest probe, MAP, hailed as the cosmic equivalent of the human genome project, with its unprecedented accuracy and precision, is yet another time machine set to take us to the birth moment of the universe, and draw a cosmic map"[2].

The 'time machines' are the extended arms of Brahma Jijnasa. They take us to the janma or birth of the universe, and reaching out to its janma is reaching its janma is reaching out to Janmadyasya yatah.

Brahmasutra is a well-known aphoristic work treating of the Brahman, it is one of the main text of the Vedanta Philosophy.

Vedanta literally, means, "end of the Vedas"; the philosophy stemming from the Upanishads, or latter portions of the Vedas. Shankara (ninth century) was the chief exponent of Vedanta, which declares that God is the only reality and that creation is essentially an illusion. As man is the only creature capable of conceiving of God, man himself must be divine, and his duty, therefore, is to realize his true nature;

Vedanta is a philosophical school whose teaching is summarized in a famous treatise, the first Brahmasutra. It became popular after the Vedic period, but the Vedantists accept the Vedic rituals. It taught that man must distrust much of what we know, and replace it by real knowledge. The Vedantists are indifferent to this world so they withdraw from it, preferring non-activity. They teach a form of monism: all matter is an appearance of the spirit, i.e. the Brahma, the Universal Soul; our sensual impressions are all maya, illusion. The distinction between Brahma and the worm is only one of gradation. People who believe in the physical reality live in a dream. Brahma, who is identical with Vishnu and Shiva, is the ultimate reality out of which all things issue forth. Realizing this brings us back to our source. Humphrey Palmer, in his book "H.W. Schomerus: Shaiva Siddhanta", explains:

"We often find in the Vedas an effort to break away from polytheism. This effort is so characteristic of them that one shrinks from calling them polytheistic; so the term henotheism or katheno-theism has been introduced, to mean a belief in individual gods, or in one individual god. This resulted in a grouping of the gods; one group being centred around Agni, chief of the earth gods, another around Vayu or Indra, chief god the atmosphere, and a third around Surya the sun, Chief god of the world above. Surya then fell back, leaving Agni Indra and Vayu as the chief gods. Later the trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva replaced this trinity. Shiva, probably Rudra of the Vedas, took over the functions of Indra and Surya; and to this day these two dispute the supremacy, each with a great following.

Brahma has no such following, remarkably, even though he is creator. To explain: Indian speculation does not concern

itself with phenomena, but looks for a fundamental basis behind the phenomena. Now the god who is the active power behind the universe is naturally taken as the true Reality behind phenomena, and this is the mythological god, Brahma, God of creation. He then merges with the underlying power behind the mantra, Brahmanaspati the Lord of Hymns, and was less and less regarded as an individual entity, but rather as the non-personal Reality behind the universe, the one unchangeable eternal substance, the Ding as Sich (Reality as it really is). This change, or more correctly this identification of the first person of the trinity with the abstract impersonal Noumenon was a product of speculation, and would not naturally lead to a particular cult devoted to Brahma.

There is a further reason why Brahma ranks behind Vishnu and Shiva as an object of worship. To the devout Indian, Brahma the god of Creation, is a god of the past; his work is done. Vishnu and Shiva are still at work, so worshipping them seems a better investment. You might perhaps expect ascetics to worship a god no longer directly involved in active life, as they seek to avoid activity in the world and even contact with it; but not ordinary worldly people, who rely on the world for their existence and well being and must bring it, with God's help, into their service. But even ascetics, though they might be expected to have a platonic love for Brahma, will find elsewhere a more suitable object for practical religious activity. With detachment from phenomena as their ideal, they were bound to look towards Shiva the destroyer rather than Brahma the creator. Shiva not Brahma must appear to them as Saviour".

People sought in Shiva a cause for the universe, seeing alongside the Destroyer also his Shakti as creating and sustaining power. Shakti took over the role of Brahma the creator. Brahma still remained nominally an integral part of the trinity, for pure speculation as a merely abstract divinity; but for religious practice he is superseded by the Shakti. It was no longer Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva that courted the worship of believers, but Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti[3].

Ramanuja sees Maya as a property of God, a concrete attribute in addition to all the abstract attributes like omniscience and omnipresence. This is why the school of Ramanuja bears the

name of Visishtadvaita i.e. the non-dualist schools for which world and souls are attributes of God. Ramanuja starts off with three eternal principles; God, Cit, (the empirical individual souls), and Acit (matter): seeking to avoid dualism by the theory of visishta (made distinct by peculiar attributes) and advaita (non-dualism); and means 'a non-dualism which does ascribe attributes'. It teaches that God alone exists, but has always had attributes: namely Cit, the individual souls, and Acit, matter. These attributes are realities, not just appearances. During the period of world-rest, they are dormant in Brahman. Then, when Brahman so decides, they make their appearance, as the world begins.

Ramanuja was more generous towards members of the lower castes, and was even for the education of women. He had mass appeal. He too founded religious centres. However, the heads here were no celibate monks but devout householders.

Ramanuja and his successors propagated Vaishnavism very effectively in many parts of India. They worship Rama and Krishna with great devotion, and find animal sacrifices to be revolting. Instead they are generous with fruits and flowers to the deities, sing and meditate peacefully. Their worship also includes giving the idols periodic baths and perfumes. The followers of Ramanuja repeat the Lord's name countless times and in various ways[4].

The propounder of Visistadvaitavada Ramanujacharya had been born in the village Tirukunnura of South India as the son of Keshava Bhatta. Ramanuja was still a boy of too short an age when his father passed away. On going to Kanchi he got education from a preceptor (Guru) named Yadava Prakash and later, he got initiation into Vaishnavism from Yamunaharya. Mahatma Nambi initiated him in Sri Narayana Mantra which, for the sake of their well being, Ramanuja related or recited to all the people. In accordance with his Vishishtadvaitavad he wrote commentaries on Prasthanatrayi (Upanishads, Brahma-Sutra, and Bhagavad-Gita), main of them being Sribhasya. He also got himself instructed by a saint belonging to lowest caste and devoted himself to the social task of removing social inequality. He re-established in India the tradition of rightful conduct supported by the Scriptures, and of devotion (Bhakti). Ramanujacharya lived a long life of 120 years Kaliyuga's year 4118 to 4237 (i.e. 1017 to 1137 A.D.)[5].

Not only Ramanuja but the great Shankaracharya also visited Kashmir. There is a hillock known as "Shankaracharya Hill" where a great Shivaling was installed and subsequently a temple has been built. The present situation of terrorism has not only sieged Kashmir Shaivism but Shankaras philosophy of Vedanta as also Ramanuja's philosophy of Vashishatdvaita Vedanta.

CONCLUSION

The Vashishtadvaita Vedanta of Ramanuja admits for theism. According to it world is not an illusion nor is God or individual souls. The latter are Ansha (part) of God. Ramanuja's system thus allows worship or Bhakti or intimate relationship with God. He can be worshipped as formless entity or idol. Ramanuja strongly rebuts the theory of Mayavad.

While the philosophy superior but dry minds, the philosophy of Ramanuja is suitable to intellect, emotional approach and above all theism where we consider God as a different entity from us to begin with. No doubt therefore that the latter's philosophy could attract more followers masac, who believed in giving and receiving love. Such devotees have Shraddha (devotion) to the Deity who returns it as Karuna (Grace).

It is believed that after Ramanuja, there have been Bhakats, devotees, scholars, poets in religion, but no spiritual philosopher of towering stature.

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11

Amarnath, The Celebrated Cave

The celebrated cave of Amarnath situated in a long glacial gorge high among the eastern mountains is visited by thousands of Hindu pilgrims from Kashmir and different parts of India on the full moon day of the month of Sawan (July-August) every year. It contains a self-formed Lingam of ice (the emblem of Shiva) which increases and decreases with the waxing and the waning of the moon.

For this reason the cave is visited on a full moon day. It is sending out an irresistible call to the hundreds and thousands of pilgrims from the remotest corners of India who crawl up this height year after year. Some say that the Lingam is simply the stalactite and stalagmite described fully in books on Geology. These are icicle like incrustations of lime, chalcedony etc., which often cover the roofs of caverns and fissures which arise from the dripping water holding these rock-matters in solution. Columns of these solid matter collect, rise and expand and, in course of time, become hard stone. They are found in many countries of the world including England. But these things are entirely different from the substance of the Lingam in the Amarnath cave. This Lingam is not impregnated with any matter but it is composed of simply pure water turned into ice. Nor is it an ice spring, as some say, for on Amavas day the ground on which it stands is found dry. There is of course gypsum in the cave but it does not form the ingredient of the ice Lingam.

The water is thawing from the roof but it does not fall on the Lingam. Waxes and wanes with the moon stated above which has been observed by several reliable persons who have stayed at Panchatarni (6 miles this side of the cave) for a full month and have from there visited the cave daily. Had this Lingam been stalactites and stalagmites, many geologists and specially non-Hindus should have raised their derisive voice and they should have made this fact known to the world long ago. On the contrary this phenomenon is considered wonderful by not only Indian philosophers including men like Swami Vivekananda who says in his book that he was all ecstasy on seeing it but also by European scientists aware of the formation of rock matters in caves and fissures. In fact had this been the case in regard to Amarnath the cave should have been filled by the sediments ages ago.

In the summer of the year 1898 Swami Vivekananda, Margaret, now Sister Nivedita and others left for Almora in the Himalayas. On the journey and during their stay there the Swami continued to instruct them. In Kashmir Swami Vivekananda, Sister Nivedita and the group stayed in house-boats, and visited all the important places. The Shalimar and Nishat Bagh, Shankaracharya hill with its Shiva temple, the temples of Pandrenthan and Martanda. They rowed in the Dal Lake often. They went to Kshir Bhavani or the Milk of the Mother, a spring near Gandhar Bal.

Sister Nivedita's most memorable visit was that to the cave of Amarnath high up in the Himalayas. She went alone with her Guru Swami Vivekananda. This was her first experience of an Indian pilgrimage. They did the journeying by stages, living in tents. They met Hindu religious men of many different groups with their different costumes. Nivedita practised austerities and suffered the same privations as the other pilgrims. But enjoying the calm and joy of a pilgrim, Nivedita entered the sacred precincts of the cave and stood worshipping the Lord Himself in the form of the Shiva-linga.

Recollecting all these experiences, she wrote later: 'As I look back on this wonderful summer, I wonder how I have come to heights so rare. We have been living and breathing in the

sunshine of the great religious ideals, all these months, and God has been more real to us than the common men'[1].

This pilgrimage is mentioned in Book 1, 267 of the Rajtarangini in the accounts of King which proves that even before the time of Kalhana, the author of the book who lived in the 12th century of the Christian Era, it was annually visited by pilgrims[2].

Swami Rama, one time Shankaracharya Karvipithaam, in his book, "Living With The Himalayan Maters", describes his pilgrimage to Amarnath cave & on the way meets Bal Bhagwan and also stays, with him in Cave for about seven days. He also confirms Jesus Christ visit & stay in Kashmir. Swami Rama, writes:

"After renouncing the seat of Shankaracharya I went to my master and stayed with him for a few days. From there I decided to go on a pilgrimage to Amarnath, the highest shrine of Kashmir. Amaranath is a cave which is covered by snow all year-round. The dripping water icicle looks like a Shiva-linga a symbol adored by Hindus, exactly as the cross is by Christians or the Star of David is by Jews. The story of a pair of white pigeons is very famous in this area. It is said that a pair of white pigeons come on the day of pilgrimage.

A Kashmiri Pandit who was a learned man was my guide on this journey. He started telling me a story about Jesus Christ, claiming that Jesus had lived in Kashmir practicing meditation. The pandit referred to a manuscript written in the Tibetan language that is preserved in a monastery situated at the height of 14,000 feet in the Himalayas. It was later translated by a Russian writer and then into English and published as The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ. In this part of the Himalayas many people believe this story, and you dare not disagree with it. There is a nearby mount, which is famous because Jesus lived practicing meditation there. My guide gave me three reasons to support this statement: first, the garb, which Jesus wore, was a traditional Kashmiri garb; second, his hairstyle was also Kashmiri; and third, the miracles that he performed are well-known yogic miracles. The Pandit claimed that Jesus Christ left Asia Minor for the unknown period of his life when he was thirteen years of age, and that he lived in the valleys of Kashmir until he was thirty. I did not know

whether to believe him, but I certainly didn't want to dismiss this idea. His love for Jesus Christ was immense. I did not want to argue with him.

"On our way to Amarnath he took me to an ashram, which was seven miles away in the forests of Gulmarg. Gulmarg is one of the places of interest often visited by foreigners. A swami lived there who was a scholar of Kashmir Shaivism and who practiced meditation most of the time.

"Kashmir Shaivism has many scriptures still untranslated and unexplained. So much is left unsaid in these great scriptures that they are only understood by those fortunate ones who are on the path and have already understood something of it. These scriptures can never be understood without a highly competent and accomplished teacher. This philosophy views the spirit, mind, body, and all levels of reality in the entire universe as a manifestation of the principle termed spanda, spontaneous vibration. The subject matter of these scriptures is shaktipata and awakening the latent force buried in human beings.

"This swami informed me of a roving adept who visited Amarnath cave shrine every summer, but no one knew where that adept lived permanently. People coming from Ladakh often saw him treading the mountain paths all alone. My interest was not only to visit the cave shrine but to meet this roving adept of the Himalayas. Of all those I have met in my life, three were very impressive and left deep imprints in the bed of my memory. That adept was one of them. I stayed with him for seven days, just fifth yards away from the shrine. He visited this cave shrine practically every year.

He was about twenty years of age, was very handsome, and the luster of his cheeks was like that of cherries. He was a brahmachari who wore only a loincloth and possessed nothing. He was so acclimated to high altitudes that, with the help of yoga practices, he could travel barefoot and live at elevations of 10,000 to 12000 feet. He was insensitive to cold. Living with him was an enlightening experience to me. He was perfect and full of Yoga wisdom and serenity. People called this young adept Bal Bhagawan (Child-God Incarnate), but he always kept himself above such

praises and constantly traveled in the Himalayan mountains. He already knew my master and had lived in our cave monastery. He asked about several students who were then practicing meditation with my master. He spoke briefly in gentle sentences, but I could feel that he was not pleased when my guide started bowing, touching his feet, and running around in emotional devotion. This great adept became an example for me.

"I had never before seen a man who could sit still without blinking his eyelids for eight to ten hours, but this adept was very unusual. He levitated two and a half feet during his meditations. We measured this with a string, which was later measured by a foot rule. I would like to make it clear, though, as I have already told you, that I don't consider levitation to be a spiritual practice. It is an advanced practice of pranayama with application of bandeaus (locks). One who knows about the relationship between mass and weight understands that it is possible to levitate, but only after long practice. But this was not what I was seeking. I directly wanted to have an experience with this adept.

"I asked him a question about the highest state of enlightenment, and muttering a mantra from the Upanishads, he answered, "When the senses are well-controlled and withdrawn from contact with the objects of the world, then sense perceptions no longer create images in the mind. The mind is then trained in one-pointedness. When the mind no longer recalls thought-patterns from the unconscious, a balanced state of mind leads to a higher state of consciousness. A perfect state of serenity established in sattva is the highest state of enlightenment. The practice of meditation and non-attachment are the two keynotes. A very firm conviction is essential for establishing a definite philosophy of life. Intellect intervenes and blind emotion misguides. Though both are great powers, they should be known first, analyzed, and then directed toward the source of intuition. Intuition is the only source of true knowledge. All this- whatever you see in the world- is unreal because of its constantly changing nature. Reality is hidden beneath all these changes." He instructed me to march fearlessly on the path that I was treading. After seven days of Satsang the guide and I left this great sage. I returned to Srinagar and then went on to my abode in the Himalayas to enjoy the autumn[3]."

There is a park laid out within its premises of the temple in the Akhara, Sri Nagar. There were dharamshalas for the sadhus and hermits for their short sojourn and a residence for the mahant who looks after the entire shopping-cum-office complex.

Dashnami Akhara is the place where-from the pilgrimage for Amar Nath starts every year with religious rites and zeal. The Akhara is managed by the dharmarth Trust. Dashnami Akhara Budshah Chowk (Srinagar), a Small temple and the seat of Mahantji. Shrinagar (wrongly called Srinagar and interpreted as the city of the Sun) the abode of Lakshmi, lies in the centre of the happy valley, otherwise known as 'an emrald set in stones'.

Jehadis from across the border have carried out massacres of innocent Hindus in the remote villages of Doda. The monsters masquerading as Jehadis probably want to drive out the Hindu minority from the Muslim-majority district of Doda, just as the Pandits were hounded out of the Kashmir valley. Behind this nefarious design lies perhaps the expectation that some day the "trifurcation" of Jammu and Kashmir on the basis of religion - an idea being fostered by some at home and abroad - might become a reality.

The massacre at the meadow near village Cheerji took place at 9 p.m. on July 22, 2001 a day after the terrorist attack on Amarnath pilgrims, wherein 13 persons including six pilgrims were killed. Since the outbreak of terrorism in the State there have been over 55 major incidents of killing in which over 2000 persons have been gunned down or slaughtered or burnt alive. Out of these nearly 20 have taken place in Doda district alone. The main purpose of such selective killings has been to force the migration of the Hindus for ethnic cleansing in this district like that of Kashmir Valley.

A bigot to the marrow of his bone, Aurangzeb, the Mughal Emperor was a scourge for the Hindus and worked havoc on them through forcible conversions to the Islamic faith. It was at his behest that the governor of Kashmir, Iftikhar Khan (1671-75) equally a bigot, unsheathed the sword of Islam against the Kashmiri Pandits with the objective of securing their conversion to Islam. At this moment of grave crisis, some Pandits, wise and learned,

under the leadership of Kripa Ram Dutta of Bhawan, District Anantnag, decided to repair the Amarnath cave, held as an abode of Shiva, to pray to the Lord and seek His guidance for the resolution of crisis they were faced with.

At the holy cave, Kripa Ram, an ardent believer in Shiva's grace, had a dream in which Lord Shiva introduced him to the address of Guru Tegh Bahadur and directed him to seek his guidance to meet the challenge posed by the demon of bigotry and religious blindness. Acting upon the Lord's Counsel, Kripa Ram as the head of a delegation of 500 Kashmiri Pandits crossed over the mountain ramparts to reach Anandpur village in the Punjab to call on Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Guru Tegh Bahadur advised the Kashmiri Pandits to go to Delhi and tell the bigot in the Emperor that he should first convert Tegh Bahadur to Islamic faith and then all of them would follow suit sans any equivocation. The same was verbatim conveyed to the Emperor. Losing his cool and flying into a spasm of rage, he summoned the Guru to Delhi. The Guru accompanied by five of his trusted and faithful disciples arrived in Delhi and Aurangzeb in all his fanatic fury and wrath asked him to embrace Islam or show some miracle to establish and prove his credentials of guruship. As a spiritualist of high order, the Guru denied that he could perform a miracle and valiantly and without a quiver refused to join the fold of Islam. Aurangzeb ordered his execution and it was thus that the guru attained martyrdom[4].

The martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur proved a waterloo for the forces of intolerance, hate and religious fanaticism. The Hindus throughout the country were aflame with a deep sense of revenge and in the end it got forged and mobilised into a strong resistance movement led by Guru Gobind Singh, who formed the 'Khalsa Panth' with the avowed objective of fighting and defeating the Muslim bigotry and fanaticism. In generating and organising the resistance movement, Kripa Ram Dutta played a remarkable role by nurturing and teaching Guru Gobind Singh at the preparatory stage till he flowered as the guiding symbol of the resistance movement against intolerance and fanatic orthodoxy[5].

The Amarnath Yatra is one of the most powerful symbols of Kashmiriyat; that knows religion, but not religious divide. For tens of thousands of Kashmiri Muslims the yatra is their livelihood. Numerous Muslim families are intimately connected to the shrine at Amarnath, revering it as their own. Perhaps, that is why the shrine was spared by militants, even when they targeted the Sufi shrine of Charar-e-Sharif. Now, fearful of possible peace in the Valley, extremists have chosen the pilgrims to Amarnath for their murderous attack.

The fact that the massacre of Amarnath pilgrims and other civilians followed the Srinagar meeting shows that there are several militant outfits controlled by the ISI and other foreign Islamic fundamentalist forces which are not interested in a negotiated settlement.

The terrorist onslaught now being unleashed is not against the Indian security forces alone but on the concept of Kashmiriyat, of which the Amarnath Yatra is a central strand. When Jammu and Kashmir Liberation front tried to act independently of Islamabad, Pakistan marginalised it and brought in the Hizbul Mujahideen.

CONCLUSION

The famous psychoanalyst C.G. Jung introduced the concept of collective unconscious defining it as the genetically determined part of unconscious in the members of a people. Jung missed the concept of Turiya or Superconsciousness by a hair-width only. The aim of Hindus is to reach Turiya, which is also called Self-realisation and can be arrived at through deep meditational contemplation. Such a stage is easy to attain in beautiful natural surroundings away from madding crowds. No doubt places of pilgrimage are located in most natural set up with some sublime phenomenon.

The Amarnath cave has all such makings. It is in a remote place, there is spiritual awe and reverence inspiring formation of Shiva Lingam. One has to pass through enchanting mountainous beauty to reach there. No doubt the atmosphere is surcharged with divine vibrations. Then there are mutual emanations amidst the pilgrims. A visit to the cave is thus extreme uplifting experience.

It is unfortunate that terrorist elements some time carry out massacres of the soft targets in pilgrims. Yet the Hindus know that Atma is immortal. Each of us will survive for ever. This is the reason that despite many tyrants like Aurangzeb, the spiritual core in Hinduism could not be destroyed, though his regime and along with it the Moghul dynasty scattered like straw in the wind after him.

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12

Violence Not a Natural Trait

Dalai Lama the "Ocean-Wide" Lama, the spiritual and temporal ruler of Tibet; Da-Lai-La-Ma literally means 'Great Ocean Superior One'.

The present Dalai Lama, though exiled from the Potala, his 'cathedral', is universally recognized as a religious leader of the first rank, a great scholar and a spirit endowed with profound charisma. His Holiness Dalai Lama on August 5, 2001 advocated for dialogue over violence as the means to resolve conflicts. Pointing out the self-destructive nature of violence he said, "dialogue among people was necessary to promote mutual trust. It leads to better understanding and to peace and harmony. Violence was not a natural human trait, "If it was so human society would not have lasted so long", His Holiness said:

The Dalai Lama on August 5, 2001 virtually set the cat among the pigeons with his proposal that the troubled land be granted the right to self-rule. Suggesting that India and Pakistan adopt the middle path like the exiled Tibetans, the Dalai Lama said that his followers would gladly abandon their struggle for independence in exchange for "genuine self-rule". It requires no great wisdom to predict the impact of the Tibetan sage's statement on the more excitable elements within this country. The idea of Kashmiri self-rule strongly conflicts with its notion of Akhand Bharat.

At the appropriate time, we will form Akhand Bharar [United India]. We have to regain the areas, which we lost in 1947.

We have to regain Lahore the Capital of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Khalsa Raj. We have to reclaim Nankana Sahib and several other religious places, as also Sindhu [Indus] and Kasoor. The feeling for 'Akhand Bharat' has to survive because it is akin to the feeling that led to the unification of Germany, Vietnam and Poland [sic]. Partition of India was wrong[1].

His Holiness Dalai Lama also met with leaders of the Hurriyat Conference whose legitimacy has been questioned by the Indian government. Admittedly the Tibetan spiritual leader is also the political head of his followers. And yet, he has chosen to address a political issue of concern to India, which has taken care to keep the two domains separate.

More importantly, the Dalai Lama is a guest of the Indian government, which status requires that he keeps in mind the sensitivities of his hosts. Forget the religious right, even the government is unlikely to appreciate his remarks on Kashmir and his support to the Hurriyat Conference. That having been said, it must be accepted that taken on their own, the Dalai Lama's remarks are quite unexceptionable. Call it a 'dispute' or an issue', but fundamentally Kashmir is a problem. The accession of this princely state to the Indian Union was both legal and complete. The Indian position has a moral aspect too in that Kashmir is the ultimate vindication of India as a multi-cultural, multi-religious pluralist state, a concept that it the exact opposite of the Pakistan - favoured two-nation theory. If India has to transfer the focus to cross-border terrorism, then it must begin by winning the Kashmiri trust.

Historically speaking one can trace certain aspects of the traits of terrorism to the ancient civilisations of Greece and Rome. Even the Vedas and Mahabharata have glimpses of terrorist acts. It thrives on fear psychosis. By manipulating fear in a special way, terrorists have always been able to effect human behaviour in a fashion disproportionate to their effort.

All violence is unpredictable. Unlike power, force or strength, violence is always applied with unforeseeable effects. The turn of the century has distinctly seen a resurgence of religious (Islamic) oriented terrorist groups (like Taliban etc.) trying to fulfil a pan-

Islamic agenda. Recently Osama Bin Laden's threatening overtures have only psychologically unbalanced the Americans without tangible results.

Terrorists can never win an armed conflict with the state but they always hope to weaken the State's resolve to fight them. They bank on the civilised society's aversion to violence; its desire to resolve an impasse through compromises. They will not give anything away but grab whatever they can extort and resume their war of nerves. Every concession, every respite is used to recuperate and regroup.

According to Shri Bruce Hoffman, an American specialist on political violence, old terrorism generally had a specific manifesto - to overthrow a colonial power or the capitalist system and so on. These terrorists were not shy about planting a bomb or hijacking an aircraft and they set some limit to their brutality. Killing so many innocent people might turn their natural supporters off.

Shri Hoffman runs a terrorist research centre at the University of St. Andrew's in Scotland and, according to him, new terrorism has no long-term agenda but is ruthless in its short-term intentions. "It is often just a cacophonous cry of protest or an outburst of religious intolerance or a protest against the West in general and the US in particular. Its perpetrators may be religious fanatics or diehard opponent of a government and see no reason to show restraint. They are simply intent on inflicting the maximum amount of pain on the victim".

New terrorism would utilize weapons of mass destruction such as chemical, biological or nuclear arsenals. Though nuclear armed subversives are perhaps the worst nightmare of all, it is considered very unlikely that terrorist gangs, without the help of a government, would be able to procure sufficient quantities of plutonium or highly enriched uranium required to make a bomb. Though it seems to be unlikely, may prove to be not impossible. Defence Ministries of many countries of the world shuddered when Shri Alexander Lebed, the former Russian Security chief, disclosed in 1998 that up to hundred mini nuclear devices or suitcase bombs, designed to be used by the Soviet special forces,

had gone missing. It is not too unlikely for the billionaire terrorist Osama bin Laden to procure such a bomb from the underground market. It is also not too unlikely for him to acquire a bomb through the Government of Pakistan.

At the time of the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001 in New York, Washington & Pentagon, Osama Bin Laden might have been in somewhere in Karachi (Pakistan), Kabul (Afghanistan). Saudi engineer who volunteered to work for the CIA, Osama Bin Laden, used to tell the Americans who trained him in special operations that the jehadis had defeated one superpower and thereafter it would be the turn of the other superpower.

The precision, meticulousness and the thoroughness of the operations leave one in no doubt that highly trained and skilled people have perpetrated these acts of terrorism. The Pentagon was chosen as a target to show the world that the jehadis can strike at the heart of the US military command and control. The World Trade Center towers were presumably chosen since its destruction would hit three nationalities, which the jehadis hate - American, Israeli and Indians - and cause large casualties among them.

The US reacted only to acts of terrorism against itself, such as the CIA shootings, World Trade Centre bombing, the destruction of the US embassies in Dar-es-Salaam and Nairobi and the attack on the USS Cole. The US and other Western democracies did not build up a strong enough alliance against international terrorism.

Terrorism knows no boundaries; nor does it have any genuine religious base. It has to be viewed as a crime against humanity and firmly dealt with as such. What is regrettable in the present global response is that saner voices of the mute majority of peace-loving innocent citizens get lost in petty geopolitical, economic and strategic calculations of the super power and other big powers. It is never too late. There is still time to reflect coolly, quickly and sharply and draw appropriate lessons, followed by immediate and effective action.

The new monstrous face of terrorism calls for war-like preparedness. It calls for a fresh look at the working of intelligence agencies worldwide. It also underlines the urgency for total

annihilation of terrorist training camps wherever they exist, including the ones in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In short, there has to be a total war against all terrorist groups, which pose a big challenge to the civilised human order.

The world leaders, particularly President George W. Bush, ought to remember that they must not be seen in history as incompetent and impotent figures who betrayed humanity at a critical juncture. It is time the world community started looking at the problem in a new perspective and launched a coordinated global drive against various terrorist groups whose activities pose a threat to peace, human values and the working of global order. Terrorism is a crime against humanity. Terrorism has to be eliminated from the face of the globe. We will have to strike at the root of terrorism while the world opinion is against fanaticism - driven acts of terrorism against humanity that destabilizes the established democratic and civilised order. It's now or never.

A violent history of elusive Saudi militant Osama Bin Laden, the prime suspect in Tuesday's attacks, is widely regarded as the world's most dangerous man.

1990: the gulf War and flow of overseas troops into the Middle East had fueled bin Laden's anger against the US

1991: Saudis arrest him for criticising their decision to bring in American troops. Leaves for Sudan and begins setting up terrorist training camps.

1992: Claimed to have carried out attacks on US soldiers in Somalia. An attack on a hotel in Aden, Yemen, whereas around 100 US servicemen were staying. No one was injured. Osama Bin Laden claimed responsibility.

1993: Believed by US officials to be behind first bomb attack on World Trade Center, in which six died and more than 1, 000 were injured.

1995: Supported a failed plot to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Ethiopia. Backed the bombing of military training facility in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, that killed five American servicemen.

1996: Sudan bows to US pressure and asks bin Laden to leave. Takes refuge in Afghanistan. Backed another bombing in Saudi Arabia that shattered an apartment complex housing US servicemen, killing at least 19.

August, 1998: Believed to have planned the US embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania that killed 224 people, including 12 Americans.

2000: Officials believe the attack on USS Cole in Yemen that killed 17 US soldiers had the markings of a bin Laden operation.

June 17, 2001: Ten persons with grenades, machine guns and bombmaking equipment arrested in Amman, Jordan, in a suspected plot to attack the US Embassy in Sanaa, Yemen. Investigators are trying to determine whether the Islamic Army of Aden, a militant group associated with Osama Bin Laden may have been involved.

September 11, 2001: US confirms bin Laden and his al-Qaeda group are the leading suspects in attacks on New York and Washington. Terrorist attacks on the World Trade[4] Centre (WTC) in New York and the Pentagon in Washington have unveiled a new phenomenon in terrorism where a group of motivated persons volunteers to embrace death besides claiming the lives of a large number of innocent people.

It was during the Second World War that the concept of highly committed suicide bombers emerged which gradually led to "human bombs". Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was the first victim of a human bomb. Subsequently, a number of cases of Killing of VIPs by human bombs have been reported from South Asia.

"I am fighting so I can die a martyr and go to heaven to meet God. Our fight now is against the Americans".

—Osama Bin Laden

Osama Bin Laden is the test-tube baby of the CIA-ISI combine. He came to Afghanistan in the early eighties on the call of jehad to fight against the Soviet troops, which landed in

Afghanistan in 1979 on the Christmas night in aid of the leftist regime. In any case the Soviet Union was on the brink of collapse that the Pentagon and the CIA knew, but in its wisdom the USA decided to take revenge of its defeat in Vietnam war.

The CIA legitimized jehad to fight a proxy war in Afghanistan. General Zia was too willing to let his country act as a frontline state to save his skin after hanging Z.A. Bhutto. The Pakistan regime got $ 6 billion from the USA and Saudi Arabia besides the money raised by way of subscriptions from rich Arabs. The Talighi Jamaat of Pakistan spread out its wings to recruit Islamic volunteers from all over the world including the USA, Canada and Europe.

The Chinese came into the picture to teach the Russians a lesson. The Chinese Muslims were encouraged to join jehad by China in a big way. They were trained and armed by the Chinese. Egypt got an opportunity to throw out the Muslim Brotherhood cadre to far away Afghanistan as they had organised to overthrow a moderate regime in Egypt. As a result, President Sadat was killed. The assassins left for other destinations mostly in Afghanistan. One such person was Abdullah Azzam, the spiritual guru of Osama Bin Laden. The duo participated in the Afghan war in a variety of ways. Ultimately, Azzam and his son were killed in a car blast in Peshawar. By that time Osama Bin Laden had acquired the image of a hero who fought "one in the name of Allah".

Osama's past life as a youth was like any other spoiled child of a rich father. For fun he often used His outlook changed for a variety of reasons to Islamic fundamentalism. He heard the Islamic scholars in Saudi Arabia for spiritual inspiration as he perceived disorder in West Asia.

While operating in Afghanistan he came in contact with jehadis from all over the world. They gave him an idea to consolidate the diverse jehadis under the umbrella of his organisation called Al-Qaida, which means "base" in English[2].

Al-Qaida, Osama as well as the Taliban do not operate in isolation. The common thread for all these phenomenon is Pakistan.

Since 1989, Pakistan, the main supporter of the Taliban, has coordinated the largest terrorist operation in the world directed against Jammu and Kashmir state of India. Groups such as Lashkar-e-Toiba, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and Jaish-e-Mohammed share logistics and training in dozens of Pakistani and Afghan camps with the Al-Qaida network. Trainees of these camps operate in Muslim Hotspots from Bosnia in the west to Philippines in the east.

Senseless violence, and the mindset that gives birth to it, has been on display in Jammu and Kashmir for 12 years. Killings, torture and brutality by Pakistan trained terrorists have been a daily feature, with tens of thousands dead. Hindus and other non-Muslims, as well as those Muslims who oppose Islamic fundamentalism are specifically targeted.

The so-called Islamic fundamentalism, if judged by its result, is the greatest crime of its kind against humanity. Anything or anyone can be eliminated, but what is impossible to eliminate is the hatred produced by a sacred ideology: Hatred generates violence and ideological hatred generates unlimited violence. It can kill off all of humanity without suffering any feelings of remorse or repentance. Hence the self-styled Islamic fundamentalism turns into an un-Islamic theory.

It would be right to say that Islam is a name for peaceful struggle, while the so-called Islamic fundamentalism is quite the reverse. Islam is a religion, which preaches non-violence. According to the Quran, God does not love *fasad* or violence. Basically, *fasad* is that action which results in disruption of the social system, causing huge losses in terms of lives and property.

Conversely, we can say with certainty that God loves non-violence. He abhors violent activity being indulged in human society, as a result of which people have to pay the price with their possessions and lives. Other statements in the Quran support this. For instance, we are told in the Quran that peace is one of God's names. Those who seek to please God are assured of the sixteenth surah that they will be guided by Him to "the paths of peace". Paradise, which is the final destination of the society of God's choice, is referred to in the Quran as 'the home of peace"[3].

The terrorist strikes in New York and Washington were manifestations of years of preparations. Logistics had to be arranged, people has to be carefully selected and trained. Organising such an attack obviously required huge expenditure. The Jehadis were stationed at different locations, and some got trained as commercial pilots. The ground support system was organised. The strikes have shaken up the entire world. There is a chorus for retaliation in the United States against Osama and his Al-Qaida network.

Even as the international community regards with shock and horror the barbarous terrorist assault on America, on September 11, 2001 what will seem all the more frightening is how dangerous the world has become in the post-cold War period. It was the grim possibility of a nuclear confrontation between the US and the former Soviet Union, which had kept the world on tenterhooks for nearly half a century.

The real perpetrators in this case are shadowy groups of marauders who may not belong to a single country. Instead, they may be a motley gang of mercenaries from varying backgrounds who happen to have been brainwashed by someone with a messianic zeal to support a specific cause. The rules of the game, therefore, have changed completely. Since no single country is formally involved, it will be extremely difficult for the US - or any other country, which may be targeted by these terrorists - to strike back with precision.

As America reeled under the horror of hellish devastation on the blackest Tuesday of the 21st century, a stunned world stood suspended in disbelief at the vulnerability of what was thought of as a Ramboesque superpower. Critics and admirers alike are stupefied at the ease with which terrorists pierced through the US security umbrella to pick their targets, strike with monstrous precision and wreak incalculable destruction. Paradoxically, America's vulnerability proved to be the same freedom that its open society so cherishes; and on which its free enterprise thrives. The business of America being business, the fast lanes of trade and commerce took precedence over cumbersome security hurdles at airports. Inevitably, lax security precautions compounded by complacency left a gaping hole through which four planes could be hijacked at almost the same time for a scorching suicide

mission. In its techno-corporate avatar, America had shielded itself behind a hi-tech fire well and in the reckoning ignored human error and terror.

Osama began his dangerous campaign against the USA in the early nineties after the super power-led allied attack on Iraq. He felt hurt by the "desecration" of Islam's holy land (Saudi Arabia) with the stationing of American troops there. He perhaps also saw in the action against Iraq the destruction of "a symbol of Islam's emerging military might", though the Saddam Hussein regime had nothing to do with religion. Osama's men first struck at New York's World Trade Center complex in 1993 but had a limited success. Then came the bomb blasts by his guerrillas at the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, resulting in the death of 224 people. But he was not satisfied. It seems he wanted nothing less than the elimination of the world's biggest financial centre to shake the American economy by its very foundations. The master terrorist succeeded on Tuesday, if his hand behind the amazing development is finally discovered. India has to guard itself with meticulous planning against the former Saudi financier as in 1999 he had announced a jehad against this country on the question of Kashmir. Alas, when India decided to strike at his camps to teach him a lesson, the USA came in the way.

"Every Indian has to be a part of this global war on terrorism. We must, and we will, stamp out this evil from our land and from the world"[4].

–Atal Behari Vajpayee

At the global level, the classical definition of terrorism and the causal factors bear the same roots as over the centuries. However what is perceptibly changing is the nature of terrorism and its tools due to multifarious factors. The new millennium is ushering many scientific revolutions.

There is revival of the phenomenon of societal and religious fundamentalism giving rise to the theory of civilisation related clashes. This in turn is causing neo-religious fanaticism, which is transcending state boundaries, and polarizing nations based on religious cultures. As the massacre in Doda during July 2001 has

again shown, the militants have intensified their efforts to refocus international attention on Kashmir in the aftermath of the Agra setback. The intention obviously is to show that unless there is a settlement, peace will continue to elude Kashmir. However, by targeting only Hindus in Doda, the militants have revealed that theirs is a futile attempt at ethnic cleansing which can by no means be regarded as a "freedom struggle", as described by General Pervez Musharraf. No description other than terrorism can be applied to the selective killing of innocent villagers belonging to a certain community.

His Holiness has told a peace conference in Chennai that the Tibetans living in exile in India had agreed to end their struggle for independence if "genuine self-rule" was granted to them by China. However; there can be no comparison between a communist dictatorship and Indian democracy. Since "genuine self-rule" can hardly be said to exist in China, such concepts have little meaning in that region. In contrast, Kashmir has had a popular government ever since its accession to India in accordance with the terms laid down at the time of the subcontinent's partition. It is beside the point, therefore, to call for any kind of "self-rule" or "the people's inclusion in the (India-Pakistan) talks", as His Holiness the Dalai Lama has said. Evidently, his lack of "association" with the Kashmir issue, as he has acknowledged, is responsible for these simplistic remarks.

It has to be remembered that there is an assembly of people's representatives in Kashmir elected on the basis of universal franchise, unlike Tibet or China. If the Indian government has to consult anyone, it has to meet these representatives first. True, there are other organisations, too, such as the Hurriyat Conference which in itself is an amalgam of more than 20 outfits. Their views have also to be taken into account, as the Centre's emissary, K.C. Pant, has been engaged in doing. But before any such negotiations can take place, the acts of terrorism conducted by fanatical elements, as in Doda, have to be dealt with ruthlessly by the security forces. The "middle path" cannot be pursued, as advocated by the Dalai Lama, when religious bigots conduct a jehad or medieval-style crusade.

Ramazan is the Islamic holy month of fasting, prayers and penance. January, 1998 is also the month in which the Holy Quran was revealed to the followers through Prophet Mohammad. For the fallen angel this is the period to spread terror among the faithful by stepping up the scale of his diabolical deeds. This year he seems to have chosen for continuing his war with God through acts of mindless violence. On the first day of the holy month - which also marked the beginning of the traditional new year - unidentified armed men killed at least 412 people, including children who were bashed against the wall, in what was described as the worst-ever massacre in Algeria since the eruption of civil unrest six years ago. As if emboldened by the rich harvest of innocent heads on the first day of the deadly strike the devil's army appears to have converted the killing of innocent civilians into a daily affair.

The desire for both peace and freedom lies at the most fundamental level of human nature and violence is its complete antithesis. And violence, whose elimination at every level is the necessary foundation for world peace and the ultimate goal of any international order. Basically, we all cherish tranquility, even those of us given to violence. When spring comes, the days grow longer, there is more sunshine, the grass and trees come alive and everything is very fresh. People feel happy. In autumn, one leaf falls, then another, then all the beautiful flowers die until we are surrounded by bare, naked plants. We do not feel so joyful. Why is this? Because deep down, we desire constructive, fruitful growth and dislike things collapsing, dying or being destroyed. Every destructive action goes against our basic nature; building, being constructive, is the human way[5]. We need to overcome violence, and ultimately to eliminate it completely.

Civilians have of course long been able to purchase weapons designed for hunting or personal protection, but lately they have been able to acquire arms that were designed for military use. The proliferation of arms within countries has contributed to rising violence. Full-scale civil wars and others by plague some countries near-wars; yet others may experience less organized violence, but are exposed to lawlessness and rising crime. Whatever the specific situation, the conviction that personal or societal problems can be

resolved through the barrel of a gun seems to have adherents in many countries.

Anger plays no small role in current conflicts such as those in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, the North-South problem, and so forth. These conflicts arise from a failure to understand one another's humanness. The answer is not the development and use of greater military force, nor an arms race. Nor is it purely political or purely technological. Basically it is spiritual, in the sense that what is required is a sensitive understanding of our common human situation. Hatred and fighting cannot bring happiness to anyone, even to the winners of battles.

Violence always produces misery and thus is essentially counter-productive. It is, therefore, time for world leaders to learn to transcend the differences of race, cultural and ideology and to regard one another through eyes that see the common human situation. To do so would benefit individual communities, nations and the world at large[6].

In the mean while weapons out of the Afghan pipeline have also aggravated violence in Pakistan's Sindh province and particularly its capital, Karachi, which is now a major nexus of drug and arms trafficking in South Asia. And they have been smuggled into civil-war-plagued Tajikistan, into India's Punjab region, and into Kashmir, where they increased the severity of the violence between Indian forces and pro-independence militants. Furthermore, there are reports of some of these weapons turning up in Sri Lanka, Burma, and Algeria[7]. Armed assailants mowed down 103 people, most of them youth, and wounded 70 in an overnight attack in Sidi Hamed village near the Algerian capital, Algiers, on January 11, 1998. Unofficial reports, however, put the death toll at 120. The attack, coming barely two weeks after another such massacre in the north of the insurgency-torn country, mainly targeted people watching a movie in a theatre after the end of daily fast for Ramzan. The marauders first exploded a bomb outside the theatre and followed it with indiscriminate firing on the movie-goers who came out after the blast.

The brain behind Bombay blasts and else where in India, may not be difficult to identify, recognise and locate. Evidence

points to ISI hand in Bombay blasts. Terrorism today falls within the concept of a low intensity conflict (LIC). LIC has been defined by the US Army as: "A limited politico-military struggle to achieve political social, economic or psychological objectives. It is often protracted and ranges from diplomatic, economic and psycho-social pressures through terrorism and insurgency. It is generally confined to a geographical area and often characterised by constraints on the weaponry, narcotics, tactics and local level of violence".

One finds Karachi-the port city and commercial centre of Pakistan, has not only become a war zone but a city divided into ethnic and sectarian ghettos. Ever since the Afghanistan's refugees started pouring into the city the underworld trade started flourishing. The illegal activity revolves around narcotics, arms, real and imaginary estate, transport business. All this eventually may lead to instability and disintegration.

We must realize that, in a thermos-nuclear age, war would mean the extinction of all civilised values. We must pull ourselves of the world of strife and hatred and be prepared to work unitedly with the sense of harmony and peace. Gandhiji worked in this spirit and paved way towards the realization of peace.

Conflict is inherent in life. Man is in conflict with man and animals. The conflict is the outcome of selfish nature in man. He is in conflict not only with his own self but with the others. The conflicts are in family, in the society, among the States and also at global level. We need the ability to resolve conflicts. Everyone wants happiness and this can be achieved the moment there is realisation that we are co-sharers with others in nature. Every being - human and others - has his share but conflicts start when we behave that all the resources are for oneself or for a particular nation and not for others.

When a man has reached the highest, when he sees neither man or women, neither sex, nor creed, nor colour, nor birth, nor any of these differentiation, but goes beyond and finds that divinity is the real man behind every human being, then alone he has reached the universal brotherhood[8]. Such a man is above conflicts. He is in the stage of sameness for all. His Holiness the

Dalai Lama advocates "love and compassion free of religion". Human beings should develop love and compassion independent of any religion or faith. When we are born, we were free from any religion, but we were not free from human love. Compassion should arise from the goodness of the human beings, rather than from any particular faith. Individuals must have a universal responsibility. Underlying the interdependency and sameness of the world.

Each individual is to play an independent role in his life and make his individual efforts to make life sublime on this earth and not only be beckon light to others but also to help others. Such a man cannot be in conflict with others.

Almost all pacifists advocate resisting such tyranny and violence at the cost of life. The moment you resist an unjust law, you are a free man, says Gandhi. If one honest man stands up against segregation, that will usher in a new era in the United States, says Martin Luther King. It is here that the thin line dividing non-violence from violence becomes blurred. What is the limit to which you can follow a non-violent step without being swept by violence yourself? Almost all the movements Gandhi led against the British turned violent eventually. It will perhaps be closer to truth to say that violence will ever remain in life, but non-violence alone can generate the necessary moral force to prevent violence from completely overtaking and destroying us[9]. For heaven's sake, let our children enjoy knowledge and not learn to hate it. This mental violence needs as much to be steamed as physical violence.

The first condition of non-violence is justice all round in every department of life: Justice for all and appeasement to none. Just as one must learn the art of killing in the training for violence, so one must learn the art of dying in training for non-violence[10].

In fact the art of violence does not mean emancipation from fear but discovering the means of combating the cause for fear. Actually, the votary of non-violence has to cultivate the capacity for sacrifice of the highest type in order to be free from fear. The votary of ahimsa, it is believed, has only on fear, that is of God[11].

Violence, is needed for the protection of things external, non-violence is ended for the protection of the Atma, for the

protection of one's honour[12]. The method of non-violence, it is said, is a universal principle and a hostile environment does not limit its operation.

Its efficacy can be tested only when it acts in the amidst of and in spite of opposition. The true nature of non-violence should necessitate complete abstention from exploitation in any form. The method of non-violence is, in fact, a power which can be used equally by all children, young man and women or grown up people provided they have a living faith in the God of Love and have therefore, equal love for all mankind. When non-violence, is accepted as the law of life, it must be pervaded the whole being and not to be applied to isolated acts[13]. However, the practise of non-violence does not mean a resignation from all real fighting against wickedness. Complete and perfect non-violence is not possible in society but it is not impossible if man tries to follow the path of the principle of non-violence. Non-violence of the mere body without the co-operation of the mind, is non-violence of the week....and has therefore, no potency. If we bear hatred in our bosoms and pretend not to retaliate, it must recoil upon us and lead to our own destruction[14].

Man as animal is violent, out as spirit is non-violent. The moment he awakes to the spirit within, he cannot remain violent. Actually it is not easy to apprehend the real nature of non-violence. Non-violence is not an easy thing to understood, still less to practise weak as we are. We must all act humbly and continually ask God to open the eyes of our understanding, being, ever ready to act according to the light as we daily receive it. To say in his own words "my task as a lover and promoter of peace; therefore, today consists in unflinching devotion to non-violence in the prosecution of the campaign for regaining our liberty. And if India succeeds into regaining it will be the greatest contribution to the world peace[15]."

There is a need to enlarge the concept of family to include the whole humanity and to give meaning to it. There is a hope for the world in Gandhi's sublime message of love, universal harmony and tolerance. We are to keep it up as members of the human family striving for goodwill, human welfare, friendship and peace.

All religions denounce violence, yet in the middle of the battlefield, Lord Krishna exhorts Arjuna to lift his Gandeev against his own kith and kin. Religions denounce violence, hundreds are killed every year in this country and elsewhere because of communal violence. However, whenever we hit our children, it fills us with guilt. Psychiatrists like Dr Wayne W. Dyer commands us against committing such sins.

We have a substitute if we totally eliminate violence from our system. The substitute is called peace. Whenever violence reaches hugely destructive limits, societies strive for peace. But, we have before us examples of civilisations, which pursued peace and perished. The Romans perished. Buddhism almost vanished from the land of its origin because of its doctrine of peace and compassion. In sum, the violent ones usurp peaceful societies. Violence, therefore, should not be treated only as a means for survival. It is also birth pangs for change.

The world "Hinsa"- "Violence" signifies the slaughter of a living being. To slay requires an unsympathetic attitude of mind towards the victim, and this, in positive term, is called hatred. "Hinsa", therefore, means hatred, - that narrow mood of mind habitual to vulgar people who take for dead all whom they do not like[16]. Hence its opposite, "Ahimsa", means non-hate, - absence of hatred: that is, in positive term, sympathy or love[17]. It has been held by some that absence of hatred is the height of religion (*ahimsa paramo dharma*)[18], inasmuch as it promotes love which is the power of uniting the individual souls with one another, the power of restoring the lost Paradise. Others have maintained that hatred has its undeniable raison d'être (or right to be) in the fact that it is the force of righteousness, - the force which enables the individual to live his life upon Earth. Righteousness implies hatred towards wrong. In the never-ending fight of good against evil, hatred shall always retain its place. There is a world of thoughts in the old adages: "sparing the wicked is killing the virtuous"; "Let him who loves peace prepare for war".

We seem to have a war virtually on our doorstep, we need to understand that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. If through centuries of war, the human civilisation has not achieved eternal peace, one more show of strength might not provide the

answer to the world's woes. "Where there is peace, "God is", says a proverb.

Those who declare war in the name of religion or a cause or simply to wreak revenge should understand that it will only lead to more hatred and more wars. No religion advocates war, rather all religions advocate peace. Very often, human suffering is caused by just a handful of people because of their brutal interpretation of religion and dogmatic policies.

The Buddha has said, "Many are those who are not aware that one day we all must die. And those who are aware of it appease their quarrels or wars do not get over in a day and seldom are won. The scale of suffering that ordinary people are subjected to in their wake is unimaginable. However, we never seem to learn. We have made this world a theatre of war rather than a theatre of peace.

The Quran has said, "God invites you to the Home of Peace. He guides whom He will to a straight path. Those that do good works shall have a good reward, and more. Besides, neither blackness nor misery shall overcast their faces. They are heirs of Paradise: in it they shall abide forever". No religious text therefore advocates war. Yet over and over again, we seem to believe that the only solution to any of our problems is through war. One day a nation's pride is hurt, another day a territory is snatched, the third day lives are destroyed in a terrorist strike - and the solution we have figured out is war.

"Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than war".

–John Milton

Terrorism is the cowards' weapon, as it involves sneakiness and obviates facing an enemy. Now that the enemy has declared war, the terrorists and their sponsors are all pleading innocence and condemning the airborne attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. The Taliban and Jehads Bin Laden quickly uttered words of innocence.

The jehad on jehadis will extend beyond Afghanistan. And it will go on for years. As Vajpayee stated, "The world must join

hands to overwhelm them militarily, to neutralize their poison". The outcome of this war will determine the long-term security of India, particularly J&K the US and other free societies.

CONCLUSION

Biologists tell us that man is primate by ancestry (being descendent of apes) and carnivore by adoption, and thus has tendencies of both herbivores and carnivores. Herbivores never over eat and carnivores do not kill in excess of their requirements. Intentional violence is not a built in mechanism in our genes nor in our habit. Hence violence is not a natural trait. Those who perpetrate bodily crime, terrorism or related violence are unnatural in their behaviour. They have to be dealt with firmly as peaceful persuasion appears to have fallen on deaf ears. All nations of the world should act in unison on this issue. Combating terrorism will be a natural and religious holy war. Lest suppressors of terrorism themselves resort to terror, constant monitoring would be necessary.

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13

Secularism Commands Happiness

Each community has its own culture, which gives it form shape and flavour. In spite of problems of history and external incursions Kashmiri Pandits' heritage has survived for the past over thousand years or more. Kalhana wrote Rajtarangani in 1149 A.D. In this historical treatise he has described the outstanding virtue and cultural richness of Kashmiri Pandits.

Kashmiri Pandits' cultural and spiritual heritage emanates from the valley of Kashmir. The centres of Kashmir Pandits' culture and spiritual excellence that exist in Kashmir needs to continue. Kashmiri Pandits appear to have been caught in a time warp. Even as they have stepped into the 21st century with their forward-looking attitude, they are struggling to come out of the night that descended on them with the advent of Islam in Kashmir. It is a night that seems to have stretched into eternity with the ghost of Sikandar Butshikan coming to haunt them from time to time, assuming different forms to generate new fears.

As things stand today, the lines that distinguish them from Kashmiri Muslims are very few thin and blurred. As a distinguished Kashmiri Pandit put it bluntly, we have become "Muslim Brahmins". The truth of this is not difficult to see. Pandits today have left, for example, with no music of their own (except henze) no dance, no theatre, no traditional arts and not even a costume which they can call really their own. Even their language has lost its original

purity[1]. They were forced by the compulsion of circumstances, to adopt composite culture and secular ways, believing that Secularism is a system of utilitarian ethics, seeking to maximise human happiness or welfare quite independently of what may be either religious or the occult[2]. If all human activity in this world could be labelled "secular", on the ground that it pertains to "this world" as against "the other world", and all religious thought and activity could be described as "secular", as it takes place in this world.

Secularism is not a negative or a passive concept but a positive and proactive one, which calls for an unbiased involvement also. Tolerance and equal respect for all religious faiths are its hallmark.

The most salient feature of Indian history is the unity in diversity-where-different diversities co-exists. The strength of India lies in its diversities and diversities are the strength of Indianness. It is the strength of tolerance, cooperation and mutual confidence. It is the strength of Indian culture a common heritage of India, which strengthens unity of the people[3].

The basic value being that a secular state must not discriminate between citizens on the basis of religion and should ensure equality of all citizens before law and protect their lives and properties. The policy of creating special financial and other institutions for the benefit of special religious groups is violative of spirit of secularism. Creating political alliances with a separatists and secessionists is not secularism.

Muslim League, which partitioned India, should have no place in India and Muslims who hate India should also have no place in partitioned India. But both have been revived and given respectability just for political gains. Muslim League has formed government with others in some state(s). What could be more lethal than such blatant mixing of religion and politics and mixing of treason in politics[4] ? The politics in India has united the forces, which divided the country on the basis of religion. It has divided the Hindus

Hindu society has been divided in every conceivable manner, vertically, horizontally and every way. While diversity on every

count has been a Hindu trademark and cultural strength, it has become a political weakness in the hands of power-hungry and corrupt politicians who have exploited the diversity in every field.

Of course, there are Hindus who practice Hinduism. There are Hindus who are Hindus in thought and allegiance but do not practice whole or part of Hindutva out of practicability. There are Hindus by birth but not by merit or achievement. There are Hindus who only have Hindu names by birth but have given up Hinduism either for Christianity, Islam or for just atheism. There are people who pose to be Hindus. There are Hindus who are Hindus and there are Hindus who are socialists, communists, capitalists, materialists or simply politicians. There are Hindus for whom stateism, individualism, Westernism or secularism are supreme religions and nothing else has any room in their scheme of things.

So Hindus cover wide spectrum of allegiance to Hinduism ranging from total to nil and it is this wide spectrum that gives the hiding place for helping Hindu-haters and Hindu-baiters. Many Hindu-baiting organisations with willing Hindu-haters from Hindu society, are disintegrating the Hindu society.

Democracy was supposed to transfer the power from the ruler to the ruled. But politics has essentially conquered the democracy itself. Politicians have found ways to divide and marginalize their opponents and gradually transfer the 'people power' to the government power and politicians' power. Politics shape our lives, engineer our environment, and filter our worldviews. Politics produce realities for us that we blindly take as truth. Politics is everywhere and everything and everybody has become a votary and a constituency of politics. There is no escape. Religion also shape lives, environment, worldviews, realities, culture and nation.

India falls with the fall of Hinduism and rises with the rise of Hinduism. This axiom is eternal truth as far as India is concerned.

Secularism, first and last implies a philosophical or psychological revolution, a revolution in the minds of men. This revolution means a fundamental change in the outlook of men,

in their out-look on life, solely, having, in fact, on everything that concerns man's life here, in this world[5]. However, secularism as understood is nothing but political expediency. The concept of secularism was debased and de-spiritualized by the power crazy mind in India. Justice equity and truth were sucked out it. Indian secularism is a midway between individual freedom to follow any religion peacefully and to regulate such activities, which are not integral part of religion.

A peaceful life is the ideal life not only in this world but also in the hereafter, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan[6] of the Islamic centre asserts: "Peace is basic to Islam. Islamic living is living in peace." Quran opens with the verse: "In the name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate..." The verse is repeated in the Book 114 times. If one goes through the contents, it becomes evident that the spirit contained there in is one of peace. Yet Islamic societies are marked by turbulence and the name of Islam is associated with violence.

On the occasion of launching his book, "Faultline Kashmir", and to talk on the bone of contention between India and Pakistan, former journalist and now full time author Christopher Thomas, said:

"The world should be scared of what's happening in Kashmir since the state itself is not the issue but just a tool, a means for two countries to test their ideologies. The war in Kashmir is not territorial but ideological. Pakistan wants to prove its two-nation theory and for this it must ensure that India's secularism fails there. Peace challenges the very precept of the 1947 partition".

Many in India and Pakistan agree that partition of the country was greatest historic blunder. The mistake cannot be corrected now with ease. Pakistan is a reality. For anyone not accepting that reality coupled with the accession of Kashmir to India as its integral part would be the greatest of all the fundamental mistakes that can invite a colossal calamity for not only India and Pakistan but for the entire world.

The oddity in Pakistan is that a religious law (Sharia) overtakes the rule of law. The result is tyranny in the name of

Jehad and divine sanction. When things go against the tenets of Islam, clergymen and even the saner element do not condemn such acts.

So, Pakistan is encouraging "conflict by sponsoring armed militant groups in the state". For India, "It is a testing ground of its secular theory which though battered still lies at the heart of India. If it fails, it will strike at the heart of the country because India has always held that politics and religion should be separate".

Caught between these two ideologies are the "forgotten people", and Kashmir is actually their tragedy. This sort of "ethnic cleansing" was one of the worst seen in recent times. "Around quarter of a million people have been rendered homeless. They have been humbled, humiliated and destroyed".

The violence, arson killing and looting of Hindu Sikhs and Buddhists indicate that it is a worst form of ethnic cleansing.

History tells us that the separatist Muslims were hands in glove with the foreign British and opposed the freedom movement tooth and nail. They also committed the most heinous sin of cutting up our holy and beloved motherland. In fact, it was the secessionist Muslims remaining in Bharat who had spearheaded the agitation for Pakistan and had solidly voted for partition in the crucial 1946 General Elections. After Partition, such Muslims, should have been promptly asked to pack up and leave for their Islamic dreamland. But our Hindu leaders, in all their generosity, decided otherwise. Such Muslims were allowed to eat the cake and have it too. They got Pakistan and also were allowed to stay on here.

The Christians too, as a rule, sided with the British: the Christian missionaries especially played the role of 'the fourth arm of the British imperialist army', as the noted Gandhian Joseph Cornelius Kumarappa put it. And if in face of all this, the non-Hindu were to grumble and conspire against the Hindu, what will the Hindu do except to put the former in his place?

The Hindu who made supreme sacrifices for the freedom of the country has today less rights than those who sided with the enemy and vivisected his motherland. It is they who have coined

words like secularism to befool and blackmail the Hindu and to boost up the non-Hindus. Behind the secular smokescreen, every sentiment, every anti-Hindu fanaticism of non-Hindus was respected as their 'minority identity', while the hallowed sentiments of the Hindu were declared communal and anti-secular. While the non-Hindus had constitutional rights to protect their 'identity', the Hindu was supposed to have no identity at all.

Of course, the ruling politicians, whatever they did, paraded the badge of secularism. Nehru struck a political bargain with the Muslim league leaders in Kerala to keep the Congress in power. And still Pt. Nehru remained the 'architect of secularism'. This is the secular trap in which the Hindu has been continuously held captive since the very birth of our independence[7].

It is because of such an attitude that we, the people of India, have not come closer to national unity. Hindu, in his own country, wherever he is in minority, is being squeezed. The fault is with the basis of the national integrity. The basis of national oneness in Bharat, therefore, has to be understood in the light of this - our own pristine national ethos. Doubtless, our own national basis for the realization of this broader all-world vision has to be a spirit of intense devotion to our country as a whole in the hearts of all our countrymen.

Our motherland, therefore, has been described as punya-bhoomi, dharma-bhoomi, karma-bhoomi, and the moksha (Nirvana) bhoomi. Her entire length and breadth has been punctuated with spots sanctified with the touch of our gods and goddesses, seers and saints, heroes and martyrs, poets and scientists, philosophers and bards. Her children, the people, are further blended into a single well-knit family with a common thread of culture and heritage, tradition and history. The apparent differences of caste, sect, language, region, etc., get continuously dissolved in that single powerful, harmonizing current of shared cultural values. Well, such is the wholesome and positive fountain-head of our national cohesion born out of the innate conviction of 'One Country, one people, One Culture'.

With more than ninety percent of the population becoming Muslim, there was no room left for discomfort over the total

transformation of the Kashmiri society. The infidels had been converted or dumped alive in bags in the Dal Lake whose embankments were built with the numerous books Shaivism's others, they had written during the centuries past. The Sword of Islam had completely triumphed in the land of old Kashyapa. Since then every account of Kashmiri life has become Muslim-centric, as if the Pandits never existed. It happened because the Hindu society became weak. Weak tolerates all indignities.

Tolerance, harmony and non-violence are the hallmarks of Hindu society and they are produced naturally when Hindu society is vibrant and alive. It is when Hindu society is attacked, subjugated, disintegrated or degenerated that the virtues that Hindu society is traditionally known for simply dries up. Hindu society considers tolerance, peace and non-violence as the 'means' to achieve God-conscious life and supremacy of Dharma.

When Dharma is established, tolerance, peace and non-violence also get re-established in their rightful place as 'means' to sustain Dharma.

Everybody knows that Gita was spoken in the battlefield to rearm the reluctant Arjuna to fight the evil. Arjuna was disarmed because he could not see the evil in evil and therefore rejected confrontation as the means. Lord Krishna, through Gita, made Arjuna see the evil and fight it with velour. So Gita is a war-song of the battlefield.

CONCLUSION

Indian Constitution inter alia describes India a secular state. The idea is not that our country is a state without religion. It simply means that there is freedom for following any religion. All religions should have mutual respect for one another. However, many fanatics not only to further its doubtful ends, but also to harm Hindu interests have used religion like Islam, though basically preaching peace and brotherhood. Surprising some Hindus have themselves helped such elements just to grind their own political axe.

It is high time that such practice stops. Otherwise the covert violence already being perpetrated on Hindus, might invite flagrant retaliation.

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14

Ethnic Cleansing

Partition gave the Kashmir problem, which in turn has given rise to the tragic migration of entire Hindu population from the Valley. It is significant that there has been no migration from the other two regions of J&K, namely Ladakh and Jammu which are Buddhist and Hindu majority areas. Hindu migrants are living in very miserable conditions mainly in Jammu. Some fled to other places like Delhi and Himachal Pradesh etc.

One of the greatest tragedies of our time undoubtedly was the partition of the country. Apart from formation of Pakistan there was carnage on a large scale. Close to a million Hindus and Muslims lost their lives. In the biggest mass migration in the living memory-some ten million people were involved. For those who witnessed the dance of the devils of lust, greed and barbarism, life was never the same again. They had lived through hell and experienced hunger, death, destruction, loss of dignity, and the loss of faith. For them, the partition of 1947 marked the collapse of a moral universe-a dissolution of civilisation.

The situation had started worsening as the deadline of Independence, August 15,1947 approached. Disturbances were the order of the day. Calm and peaceful togetherness of different communities sharing their common thoughts was abruptly and disturbed. Their coming, keeping and working together became less frequent and an eerie feeling of strange apprehensions gripped them. Rafiq Zakaria, a well known Islamic scholar and a Former Minister, in an article, "Civil War would have been preferable: The Price of Partition", writes:

"Jinnah browbeat Nehru and Patel and the two gave in, thinking that the divided parts would thereafter live in peace and harmony. It is the biggest blunder that they committed: They were frightened because at the call for direct action given by Jinnah in 1946, Calcutta saw the death in the streets of 5000 Hindus and Muslims-more of Muslims than of Hindus. Besides, the two leaders were tired of the hostile and obstructive behaviour of their league colleagues with in the Executive Council, which Viceroy Wavell had formed as an interim measure.

For such small irritants the land, which has been one unit for more than a thousand years with two communities living and working together and contributing richly to its unique culture was divided; it was a most tragic blow, struck at its very heart. It happened because, a tired and an ageing leadership, hungry for power, surrendered to the subtle intrigues of Mountbatten. Jinnah died with a year of execution of the latter's plan; Nehru and Patel regretted with in months that had they known what was to happen subsequently they would never have been a party to it." According to a well-known scholar Mushirul Hasan, "the bitter and violent contest over power sharing culminating in the partition," gives out the real mind of the leaders responsible for the vivisection of India. The damage, which was irreparable.

Lamho ne Khata kee thee
Sadyon nay saza Payee.

The history of partition that overtook and overwhelmed in 1947 had over a thousand years of communal bad blood in its veins[1]. The factors responsible for partition of the country, 55 years ago, are still at work.

Hundreds of school girls did not go to school following the Lashkar-e-Jabar instruction on dress code and its 15 August 2001 deadline. The price of *burqas* and abhayias has shot up to Rs. 1,700-Rs. 2,200 in the Valley owing to the growing demand.

Though following public outcry, Lashkar-e-Toiba backtracked on their dress code announcement, the newly created group, Lashkar-e-Jabar, came up with their own stringent Taliban-like standards. All Muslim women and girls are to wear burqas

in public. The men are required to sport beards and wear salwar-kameez. The group expects ready complaince by August 15, 2001. It appears that ISI is trying to intensify terrorism in Kashmir, sending mercenaries in *burqas*.

There appear to be no limits to the extent to which fanatical groups can go in pursuit of their creed of intolerance. Apparently drawing inspiration from the 'mad mullahs' who control most of Afghanistan, an otherwise little known militant outfit in Kashmir has managed to make it to the headlines by demanding strict compliance with an 'Islamic' dress code prescribed by them. What is shocking is that over the past few days, they have attacked young women with acid bulbs for appearing in public without covering their faces. Like the Taliban, the militant group has also ordered non-Muslim women to wear particular distinguishing marks so that they can be recognised. Though the Lashkar-e-Jabar, the outfit behind this coercive diktat, has also ordered Muslim males to grow beards and wear traditional long dresses, there have not been any physical attacks on the men.

Fear of forcible implementation has driven people to disgruntled obeisance. While girls, unable to afford the spiralling prices of *burqas* have stopped going to school. Principals of many boys' schools have already instructed their students to wear skullcaps. In fact, boys at the City's British Private School were seen wearing caps in keeping with the militant's orders. Earlier, militants had sprayed acid on four young women for not wearing burqas in public and a gunman had made an appearance in a local girls higher secondary school to enforce the dress code.

Meanwhile, laying emphasis on the purdah by Muslim women, Lashkar-e-Toiba spokesman Abu Marsad told local journalists over the phone that his outfit did not believe in coercive measures to implement the dress code. The Lashkar believes in motivation than forcible reformation of the society. Notwithstanding the Lashkar-e-Toiba announcement, Jamait-e-Islami chief Gulam Mohammed Bhat too, said no one could force people to adopt purdah. "It was as good as painting a canvas with water colours which would come off with just a few drops of rain", he said. Even today, the cinema halls and liquor shops in the Valley remain

closed due to a Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front diktat issued back in January 2001.

Ensuring security in J&K is not just about preventing unlawful activities of the militants; it is also about ensuring a climate of economic and social opportunities, and not least good governance. In the absence of the latter, Kashmir might lurch even further in the direction of Taliban-type fundamentalism. The recent incidents of women being attacked on the streets of Srinagar for failing to follow 'Islamic' edicts on dress code is a grim pointer in that direction. It is time the security question and the political process are seen not as either / or alternatives but interdependent factors.

Thus the continuing Muslim invasions of India and Muslim rule in India had virtually created a vertical split in India's consciousness, and generations of Hindus and Muslims alike were so conditioned from the birth to see the violence and aggression originate in the minds of men. So do harmony, tranquility and sentiments of social well being. India having faced external invasions and internally inflicted onslaughts down the ages has learnt the lessons of co-existence and peace from history and from the saints, seers and Gurus. The common man has translated traditional wisdom into various acts of daily life, more particularly in Kashmir.

Kashmir, undoubtedly, is land of surpassing natural beauty. The Himalayas have many other beautiful valleys and countless other places from which the great snow ranges and peaks can be seen, but none of these have the same combination of mountain and meadow, river and lake, glacier and forest, that are afforded by Kashmir. James P. Ferguson, in Kashmir: A Historical introduction depicts Kashmir, a meeting place of three great cultures-Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist. The splendid epochs of each of these cultures all have their connection with Kashmir but the distinctive feature of Kashmir is that these three cultures are not merely stages of past history but are living, co-existent forces.

The Kashmiri Pandit is one of the most distinguished representatives of Hinduism today. No one follows the five-fold injunction to prayer more piously than the Muslim of the Valley, while in Ladakh the larger rocks crowned with Gompas Buddhist

monastery and prayer wheels; chortens-Buddhist cenotaph and mane walls-prayer wall are evident in every village. In Kashmir one finds a specter of the three great religious systems of Asia, existing side by side and ruling the lives of their followers with unabated power[3]. Kashmir needs such a revival, and once again its people living in amity and peace.

Kashmir with its hoary past and bewitching beauty, philosophical intellectualism and mystic spiritualism is a paradise on earth. It has a rich collection of historical, literary and travels records which are interesting in their own right. The Kashmir valley presents an unparalleled climatic and physiographic complexity and extremes.

When the mass migration of the Pandits started during the early nineties, the Sikhs in the Valley opted to stay, because the terror tactics of the insurgents and terrorists were directed at the Pandits alone. The militancy problem in Punjab and preceded that in Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan perceived a common platform for the separatists in J and K and the Sikh seeking Khalistan. They were taken to be fighting for a similar cause and aiming towards a somewhat common objective. Kashmiri terrorists trained in Pakistan were made to believe that the Sikhs in general and those in the Valley were sympathetic to their cause.

Consequently, they were never targeted. However, terrorists often visited their villages and at times took shelter with them. The security forces have been aware of this, but realising the very difficult conditions for the survival of the Sikhs in these hostile environments, left them alone and never involved them in their intelligence gathering operations etc. the Sikhs on their part too realised the tenuous nature of their existence and preferred to stay aloof. For a minority community to live, day and night, in a hostile majority community area, in an environment of perpetual fear, where neighbours eye your property and belongings, selective killings and molestation of women go unchecked and unpunished by a commumnalised police and insensitive administration, can be the most frightening and soul destroying experience. No one knows more of this than the Pandits from the valley.

The rationale to target the Sikhs on such a scale in Chittisinghpura is somewhat puzzling. These killings have created

panic, chaos and raised the prospects of mass exodus by the Sikh community from the Valley. The Sikhs have experienced the pains of migration at a gigantic scale at the time of partition of the country and to a lesser extent during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. Therefore, these fresh waves of migrations by the Sikhs will open new wounds and add yet another chapter to their travails. The Kashmiri Pandits too had to flee from the Valley to become homeless in their own country. When the initial migration of Pandits from the valley started and the first set of batches arrived in Jammu in the refugee camps set up for them, there was palpable tension in the town. The camps for Pandits might have to be established in the Valley itself and provided the necessary protection.

Such a step would have sent the right signals to the initiators of the migrations and that ethnic cleansing and driving out the minority communities by the majority would not be allowed to occur. Nothing was done and the trickle soon became a torrent. The ethnic cleansing and migration of the Pandits was complete and the mighty Indian State looked on helplessly. If the Sikhs migrate from the Valley, be sure that sooner or later the minority communities in the districts of Poonch and Rajouri will be made to follow suit. Eventually the same fate could await Hindus and Sikhs in the district of Jammu too. This kind of situation can not be allowed to develop. The repercussions on the rest of the country, should such a situation become a reality, will be disastrous.

The fallout from the Chittisinghpura massacre in Kashmir has been no less distressing than the tragedy itself. As the death of seven people in police firing in Anantnag on April 3, 2000 has shown, the diabolic purpose of the militants in provoking fresh disturbances and violence has been served to a considerable extent. There was really more to the earlier massacre than the mere gunning down of defenceless people to coincide with the Clinton visit and proving that Kashmir remains a dangerous place. As always, a related objective was to provoke retaliation from the security forces of a kind, which will create panic and resentment among the local people.

The massacre of 35 Sikhs in south Kashmir on March 20, 2000 night makes the brutal designs of Pakistani rulers clear.

Heavily armed militants descended on Chattisinghpura village near the temple town of Mattan in Anantnag district. They called members of Sikh families out and shot them dead. The little hamlet has 250 families of this community. Militancy in the area is about 11 years old but so far Sikhs have not been targeted as a community. Pandits were made to leave their hearth and home, making their ouster a heart-rending affair. Muslims, who believed in composite culture and secularism, were arbitrarily identified and murdered. Even women and children were not spared. Recently, a number of truck operators were killed. The victims were chosen on the basis of their religicus faith. One feels sad to say that those killed after being belaboured were Hindus. There is no point in waiting for some party or group to own the responsibility for this cowardly act. Islamabad's print and electronic media have gone berserk and celebrated the heinous crime committed by their agents.

The think tanks in New Delhi and Srinagar had predicted such occurrences during the visit of US President Bill Clinton. The motive is to get publicity for the ISI and other arms of the Pakistan warlords. People living in the Indian part of Punjab have predictably expressed their strong feelings against the perpetrators of barbarism.

The massacre of 35 innocent people in Kashmir has underlined the fact that South Asia is, in President Clinton's own words, one of the most dangerous places in the world. The source of that danger, however, is not India's pursuit of a legitimate nuclear programme but cross-border terrorism, which, with its acts of random savagery, subverts stability and peace not only in this region but globally. As Mr. Clinton said, there can be no peace in thee region unless the sanctity of the Line of Control in Kashmir is respected and an end is put to terrorism. The main source of that terror has long been identified. Yet for its own reasons, Washington has been ambivalent about naming names and taking appropriate action. The latest terrorist atrocity in Kashmir appears to be in keeping with the brutal ethnic cleansing that has bled the valley for many years.

Kashmir is not synonymous with the valley. Kashmir also means the territories under Pakistani occupation since 1947. Let no one get away with the impression that the northern areas and

the PoK (western region) are secure and non-negotiable. Sad but true, it's only recently that India has claimed Pok as being an Indian Territory. In fact, it was Mr. Narasimha Rao, who first raised this issue of PoK being the 'incomplete agenda of Partition' from the ramparts of the Red Fort. It looks us fifty years to put forward this argument.

It is time India is able to evolve a worthwhile Kashmir policy beyond the rhetoric and rushing of troops from here to there every time the militants strike. If Pakistan can provide political and moral support openly to militants in Kashmir, what stops India from doing the same in Sind in support of the Mohajirs. Why do we allow Pakistan to get away with impunity by shelling the town of Kargil and Srinagar-Leh road every now and then? What stops us from shelling militant based in PoK from our side to the LoC? Unless we do to the enemy what it does to us, it will not realise its folly. But do we have it in us?

The carnage in Chatti Singhapura, near Anantnag, in which 35 innocent Sikhs were massacred on March 20, 2001, is aimed at ethnic cleansing. Except in certain pockets of the Kashmir valley, Hindus have, by and large, migrated. Sikhs, who constitute a very small percentage, had stayed back. This gory incident of the Jehadis aims at ethnic cleansing and could trigger their migration.

The bulk of the ISI - sponsored Jehadis are drawn for action in J&K from Jehadi outfits in Punjab & the North-West Frontier Province. Under severe pressure from the Indian security forces the Jehadis are hitting soft targets. The unabated massacres of Hindu, Sikhs and particularly of shepherds are part of a concerted policy to follow up on the earlier targeting of Kashmiri Pandits. The aim of Jehadis is to ethnically cleanse the Valley and force the exodus of the entire Hindu population to Jammu and Kathua districts. This is not a development that New Delhi can be Sanguine about. If such brutal killings & actions like those being undertaken by the Lashkare-e-Toiba across India continue, it may be necessary to consider striking across the LoC and even the international border in a swift, proportionate, measured and internationally justified manner. No one should be allowed to presume that our patience and forbearance is unlimited. It is for Indian Government to set its house in order and deal firmly with

those across the border who believe that India can be forced out of J&K by "bleeding" it.

Cross-border terrorism is not 'jehad' and 'freedom struggle'. The activities of Pakistan-supported Jehadi organizations are napak (unholy). They are against the tenets of Islam and humanism. Let no one entertain any delusion that Pakistan can succeed in wresting Kashmir, through jehad and terrorism, what it has failed to get through wars.

CONCLUSION

Terrorism in Kashmir has now been raging for two decades. During this period never and newer and newer terrorist outfits have been forming. More training camps have been set up in occupied Kashmir, in Pakistan and even in Afghanistan. Terrorists are now motivated lot and no longer only mercenaries. They are highly trained, well exercised and armed to the teeth. The latest addition is Fidayeens (suicide squads). They wear masks to conceal their identity and facial features. Even during training the masks are on so that they cannot recognize each other and develop personal affection. This is also useful during raids, because on capture, the captive cannot inform on his colleagues about whom he knows little.

It is high time that the concerned authorities take note of the new tactics being developed. Firm dealing with terrorism or even counter measures in enemy's den would be necessary. The ethnic purge must stop.

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15

Kashmiri Pandits

Kashmir known world over as "a garden of eternal beauty" is now a veritable hell-hole of violence, intimidation and terrorism. The cult of the gun introduced by the Muslim fundamentalists of indigenous vintage churned out from the Madrasas and Quarnic schools has devastated the total fabric of Kashmir that had tolerance, catholicity of outlook and humanism as its dominant weaves.

True to their cult, the fanatic Islamists fed on the fare of destruction, and bigotry wrought havoc and targeted the talented and peace-loving Kashmiri Pandits as a specific ethno-religious group for their externment and subsequent diaspora. Through their noxious and vile propaganda the Islamists rallied the Muslim majority for a religious war on the minority religious group which was charged with betrayal and called upon to justify itself.

While perpetrating murders on this religious minority the Muslim murderers have a farrago of canards, half-truths, accusations and distortions was concocted and set afloat against the miniscule minority with the sheer objective of covering up the acts of foul murder. Crimes of barbarism and vandalism as the instrumentalities of genocide were committed on the members of the target group with a reckless abandon. The crimes were meticulously devised programmed and executed in cold blood with the objective of scuttling their defences and finishing them off after bludgeoning and wounding them. The number of those who were mercilessly butchered loses significance but what assumes vital importance is the premeditated act of selection. The members of the religious group harbouring a non-Islamic faith were singled out. The

annihilation of the Kashmiri Pandit community has been a camouflaged operation conducted by the Islamists convinced of the murderous crimes as the final condition for the emergence of a holy theocratic state for the ghettoised Muslims.

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The present plight of Kashmir Pandits is the end-product of what the community has been facing for the past six and a half centuries. Thus, present cannot be divorced from the past. And to talk about the future at this point of time without taking full cognizance of the past would not yield any gains. The Saraswats of Kashmir, with a glorious history of thousands of years at their back, have been at the receiving end now for over six and a half centuries. Their decline in Kashmir began in 1339 AD when a Muslim courtier in the court of the last Hindu King of Kashmir, usurped the throne treacherously. The full impact of the treachery became visible with the advent of Sultan Sikandar Butshikan (destroyer of idols) forty years later. The full fury of fanaticism was unleashed on the largely peaceful Hindus of Kashmir during the

next forty years. This was the time (AD 1379-1420) when most of the Saraswats of Kashmir were either killed or had to flee from their millennia-old homeland for the plains and coastal areas of India, mostly the western coast.

Pandits of Kashmir, the Rishi Bhoomi of yore, have had a distinguished history and rich culture that produced a renowned historian of great calibre, Kalhana Pandit of the Rajatarangini fame. Rajatarangini, is the first recorded history in India. Apart from this, the Shiv-Shakti cult and the Mahayana Buddhism originated from Kashmir, besides a lot of literature on religion, philosophy, history etc. All this in Sanskrit, the mother-tongue of the great Bharatvarsha, the language of *Shrimad Bhagwad Gita*.

It was this very talented community of Kashmir, the progeny of Vedic Rishis, which was brought to the brink of total destruction during just forty years of fanatical Islamic rule (1379 to 1420 AD) calamitous times for them. Tradition has it that only eleven Kashmiri Pandit families could survive the catastrophe. The next fifty years (1420-1470 AD) of King Zian-ul-Abidedin Badshah or the great king saw reversal of the process of persecution of Kashmiri Hindus. They were recalled, their temples and shrines rebuilt and they were allowed freedom of faith. There is no record to indicate how many returned and how many were added to the eleven families, which had survived the butchery of the previous fifty years.

It was at this point of time that the surviving Kashmiri Pandits produced a Messiah of their own, in the person of the great Shree Bhat. He re-organised this very much thinned society of Kashmiri Saraswat Brahmins who had no Yajmans to whose spiritual and religious need they could cater. All the Yajmans had either been killed or converted, forcibly or otherwise, to Islam. Shree Bhat created a new class of Purohits from among them. It will be interesting to recollect that the elder son of the eldest daughter of any family was selected to pursue religious and spiritual studies and to cater to these needs of the family. The others were freed for temporal work like agriculture, etc. In the course of a century or so, those left free for temporal jobs shifted to almost all the court languages according to needs of the time. They mastered Arabic, Persian, English and Urdu languages apart

from Hindi and Sanskrit. This period also saw the emergence of the saint-poetess, Lalleshwari, who gave a new dimension to the Shaiva-Shakti cult as also the birth of Rish-Sufi cult of Kashmir urging peace and brotherhood among Hindus and Muslims.

The next 120 years or so was comparatively peaceful with some interludes of religious persecution, when the Kashmiri Pandits learnt to live with Islam according to the preaching of Lalleshwari and Nund Rishi.

By virtue of its accession to India, the State of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India. The accession has been finally settled and it cannot be reopened. But in the late fifties Peking laid claims to large areas in Ladakh and violated India's sovereignty over those areas. It secretly built a road in Aksai Chin, from Sinkiang to Western Tibet, and occupied large areas[2]. In an understanding between China and Pakistan in 1962, the Pakistan was induced to accept the position that the boundary had never been delimited, between the two countries-India and China with a view to bolster China's case against India. The area in which claims had overlapped was huge area. In an official agreement, the Chinese were left with about two-third of this disputed area and Pakistan with about one-third[3].

In 1963 the Pakistani Foreign Minister paid a visit to Peking on the invitation of the Chinese government. The two countries signed a border agreement, some areas in occupied Kashmir having been demarcated as Pakistani and some as Chinese. Neither side had any communications about it; it was really Indian Territory that was being divided up. Pakistan accepted a boundary further south of the line mentioned above conceding the entire Shaksgam valley measuring approximately 400 sq. miles to China. Besides grabbing nearly 12000 sq. miles of Indian territory in North-Eastern Ladakh, China had received in gift from Pakistan another 2000 sq. miles of territory of Jammu and Kashmir which belonged to India and to which Pakistan had no right.

During the decade old insurgency in the State Sikhs were not targeted by the terrorists but nevertheless remained in a state of perpetual fear. When the mass migration of the Pandits started during the early nineties, the Sikhs in the Valley opted to stay,

because the terror tactics of the insurgents and terrorists were directed at the Pandits alone. The militancy problem in Punjab had preceded that in Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan perceived a common platform for the separatists in J and K and the Sikh seeking Khalistan. They were taken to be fighting for a similar cause and aiming towards a somewhat common objective. Kashmiri terrorists trained in Pakistan were made to believe that the Sikhs in general and those in the Valley were sympathetic to their cause.

Consequently, they were never targeted. However, terrorists often visited their villages and at times took shelter with them. The security forces have been aware of this, but realising the very difficult conditions for the survival of the Sikhs in these hostile environments, left them alone and never involved them in their intelligence gathering operations etc. the Sikhs on their part too realised the tenuous nature of their existence and preferred to stay aloof. For a minority community to live, day and night, in a hostile majority community area, in an environment of perpetual fear, where neighbours eye your property and belongings, selective killings and molestation of women go unchecked and unpunished by a commumnalised police and insensitive administration, can be the most frightening and soul destroying experience. No one knows more of this than the Pandits from the valley.

The rationale to target the Sikhs on such a scale in ChattiSinghpure is somewhat puzzling. These killings have created panic, chaos and raised the prospects of mass exodus by the Sikh community from the Valley. The Sikhs have experienced the pains of migration at a gigantic scale at the time of partition of the country and to a lesser extent during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. Therefore, these fresh waves of migrations by the Sikhs will open new wounds and add yet another chapter to their travails. The Kashmiri Pandits too had to flee from the Valley to become homeless in their own country. When the initial migration of Pandits from the valley started and the first set of batches arrived in Jammu in the refugee camps set up for them, there was palpable tension in the town.

The ethnic cleansing and migration of the Pandits was complete and the mighty Indian State looked on helplessly. If the

Sikhs migrate from the Valley, be sure that sooner or later the minority communities in the districts of Poonch and Rajouri will be made to follow suit. Eventually the same fate could await Hindus and Sikhs in the district of Jammu too. This kind of situation can not be allowed to develop. The repercussions on the rest of the country, should such a situation become a reality, will be disastrous.

There are two possible ways to salvage the situation. One is to position security detachments in these villages and in addition arms the Sikhs living there. The other is to open suitable camps in the Valley and provide these, full protection, essential amenities including schooling for the children and adequate stipends to the families. The Pandits should be asked to come back to the Valley and into these camps. When the situation becomes normal, those in the camps can go back to their homes and rebuild their shattered lives. The government should not permit altering the revenue documents pertaining to the properties of Pandits and the Sikhs, should the latter migrate or move to the camps.

Such a course of action will send the right signals to those attempting ethnic cleansing and making J & K single community entity. That is the only option available for preserving the plurality and unity of the Indian State.

In Srinagar, Anantnag and Baramulla, Muslims have gone on strike to protest against the barbarity of the Pakistani agents. This is a positive sign, but there is a limit to the patience of the deliberately victimised section of the composite community. The Chatti Singhpura killings were micteculously planned and executed with a purpose. The mercenaries and militants had thought that the disquiet caused by them would lead to riots in large scale in the northern States spontaneously. Although there have been loud protests in Delhi and Jammu, Punjab has kept its cool.

Secular India has not allowed the communalists to succeed after experiencing the trauma of Partition. Therefore, massacre of 35 Sikhs by Pakistan sponsored mercenaries in Chatti Singhpura must not provoke the true secular Indian. Anger and anguish are natural mass reactions in such situations. But leaders with a holistic vision should convince the people of their areas that violence

cannot be ended with violence. The four-day long curfew in Jammu and the turmoil in certain pockets of Delhi have sent disturbing signals. Neither the administrators nor the security forces have been able to bring total peace to certain localities. Society in Jammu and Kashmir has remained well-knit in spite of the proxy war. The uniting factor has been Kashmiriat.

Continuous blows have been given to our harmonious socio-cultural fabric by Pakistani terrorists, mercenaries and misguided young people over the past 11 year Pandits were among the early batches of the migrants. Hindus belonging to other organised groups also left their hearth and home. They are living in exile in their own country.

The Chatti Singhpura massacre casts a question mark on the future of the subcontinent. No agreement between Pakistan and India will succeed in ending the violence in Kashmir and the trauma of the Kashmiris. No agreement on returning back will help the 250,000 Pandits who have already been ethnically squeezed out the Valley and the Sikhs who are soon likely to follow.

STRANGERS IN THEIR OWN LAND

Kashmir is noted for its beauties and bounties. It has been for centuries the object of attention of poets, painters and philosophers. It is a paradise land of lotus lakes, floating gardens, gaily-canopied houseboats, the honey-bridged Jhelum River and flower-strewn pastures all encircled by Himalayas. Kashmir's high mountains, which for the greater part of the year are covered with snow; and all the rest of the valley is a beautiful plain clothed in verdure diversified with groves, orchards, gardens and well-watered by springs and rivers a very pleasant land for those who dwell therein.

The Rishis also laid great stress on conquering worldly desires. According to the story associated with the life of Sheikh Nuru'd'Din Wali Nund Rishi, he once saw fish being cooked at a shop. He was tempted to have it. He went near the cooking place. But, after a moment's reflection, instead of picking up fish, he picked up a burning stick from the hearth and put it in his mouth. His tongue was burnt. He cried out: "O my `nafs', the

fish for you is this burning stick." The Sheikh held that the wants, the greed, were the root causes of trouble in this world. The Kashmiris' well-known disposition not to kill, emanates from the preachings and practices of the Rishis.

Hindus feel strangers in their homeland. They are persecuted in Kashmir and are forced to leave their homes because they are Hindus. They are not treated primarily as Kashmiris. However, the tragedy is that moment they migrate and come over to the other parts of the country, they are treated as Kashmiri refugees and not primarily as Hindus.

Kashmiri Pandits have also called upon the United Nations to ensure respect for the human rights of 3,00,000 Hindus in Kashmir valley, "who have been reduced to refugee status in their own country". For the dispossessed citizens of the Kashmir – both Hindus and Muslims – languishing forgotten in refugee camps, there is at least a glimmer of hope that they will one day return to their homes in the valley. People, no doubt, have comparatively greater security but the State is yet to have true democracy.

Democracy is a system of governance, wherein all the political parties and ideologies must be allowed to grow. The principle of the system is perhaps universally accepted now, but even this acceptance is not unqualified. In the ultimate analysis, the survival and acceptance of any system would depend crucially on its capacity to deliver the goods. The task that confronts democratic governments today is to maintain protection of human rights in the face of the most dangerous threat to the violation of human rights, namely, the bullets of terrorists. Scrupulous care to protect the rights of individuals under due process of law and punish human rights violations whenever and wherever they occur, is a must for the success of democracy. The continuing subversion and sabotage in the valley, has disfigured the precious secular image of India.

An analysis of the causes responsible for the creation of a problem is always the best means to help arrive at a reasonable solution to that problem. This generalization is equally applicable in the case of Kashmir. The root question is: why and how have things come to such a pass? The partition of India was a massive

disaster brought about by an unpardonable political blunder. Gandhiji's famous declaration that "*Pakistan would be built over my dead body*" was over whelmed by Nehru' unwise expediency when he conceded partition of the sub-continent with the desperate outcry of *'Na, rahega sar no rahega sar-dard'* i.e., "no head no headache".

KASHMIRI HINDUS

The Kashmiri Hindus are being politically suppressed, economically exploited and culturally extinguished. They are the hapless victims of what appears to be a centuries old plan aimed at irreversibly separating them from their ancestral soil and erasing their ethnic identity.

This plan, however, was given a super-fast execution in early 1990 in secular India, with the channelising of a mass Muslim fundamentalist hysteria towards insulting, intimidating, dishonouring, torturing, dispossessing and physically eliminating the Kashmiri Hindus. And with the exodus of Hindu minority the objective of establishment of a pure Islamic State of Kashmir. While some Hindu families were allowed to stay back to give ethnic cleansing a non-communal colour the exiled Hindus continue to be dubbed as Indian agents.

The recent increase in the tourist traffic to the Valley is no indicator of reversion of Kashmir to secular ethos. It is a result of calculated moves based on pure economic considerations. The mentors of terrorist groups seem to have understood the necessity of allowing economic development to go side by side with insurgent activities.

On the other hand the helpless Kashmiri Hindu is compelled by circumstances to sell his property at throw away prices. The State government's ban on distress sale has turned out to be a hoax as the Govt. itself is entertaining sale deeds in the courts of law. The left over property in the shape of cultivable land, orchards, houses, educational institutions and business establishments, if not sold, stands, by and large usurped. The fear of hostile present and uncertain future forces the exiled families to scatter throughout the length and breadth of the country or even the

whole world. Thus unwittingly distancing themselves from their geographical, historical and cultural roots.

During the past ten years of strife these exiles while facing numerous religious, social, climatic and economic deprivations have gone through unprecedented mental trauma leading to a spurt in many stresses related chronic diseases like Diabetes Mellitus as established through study by a leading diabetologist of Jammu city.

Though the refugee community has had the sympathies of many a people and ideological groups within and outside India and also benefited from various short-term educational and economic favours it is still far away from an agreeable, political, dignified and permanent solution to its vexed problem.

GENESIS: MISERABLE PLIGHT OF THE KASHMIRI PANDITS

The people of the Kashmir Valley constitute a racial mix - Aryan, Mongol, Afghan, Persian and others. The Pandits are of Aryan stock and are considered non-martial. Hari Singh, in his book "Kashmir: A Tale of Shame", writes that Kashmiri Pandits have brought upon themselves the contempt and elaborates:

The Gujjars and the Bakerwals are nomadic and are mostly Muslims. The Gujjars are tall, and could have come from the Caspian region. The Dogras are Rajputs, having greater affinity to the people of Punjab. Although a mountain people, the Kashmiris are not given to drink. Perhaps Islam imposed abstinence when it entered the Valley. Finally, the people of Ladakh are mostly of Tibetan origin.

The Pandits of Kashmir evoke our admiration. They are known for their intelligence. Yet they have brought upon themselves the contempt of both foreigners and fellow Indians. And now, by migrating to other parts of India en masse, in the wake of the terrorist onslaught, they have exposed their weaknesses and their inability to protect their interests. Their kin in India, holding the highest positions of the land, also failed to come to their rescue at a crucial moment. That the Pandits had a fund of good will in India is a fact. If they want to recover it, they must now return

to their homeland and fight for their lost rights. Panun Kashmir, the main organisation of Kashmiri Pandits, will be judged by how it manages to get the pandits back into Kashmir.

Even today, the Kashmiri Pandits, who are scattered all over India, but predominantly in Jammu and Delhi, find it difficult to unite even over very genuine issues. Adversity has not forced them to forge a new destiny, but only to find new causes to divide themselves.

In 1950, Kashmiri Pandits passed a resolution eschewing politics and aligning themselves with Sheikh Abdullah's party, the National Conference. However, they never occupied a position in the executive committee of this party. P.L. Handoo, an MP, was merely a special invitee to the meetings of the committee.

Unfortunately, the Pandits were the first to oppose the entry of "foreigness". (i.e., the Indians into the Valley after partition.) They were afraid of losing their jobs. Such a selfish & separatist mentality of the Pandits eventually lead to their present miserable plight. It also portraits the attitude of the Hindu society as a whole far the last one thousand years and were enslaved.

This shows how narrow and time-serving aims were of the Kashmiri Pandits. Had Punjabis settled down in large numbers, in large numbers, the Pandits would not have had to face their present plight. But, then, their immediate problems were, for them, more important than the long-term security of the community. That short-sighted policy has made them pay a heavy price. And they were also clamouring for the protection of "Kashmiriat" without knowing that it meant nothing to the majority Muslim community. Before the twentieth century, Hindus and Muslims were more integrated in the Valley. In appearance and habits, they were not much different. They used to live in close proximity, unlike Hindus and Muslims in many other parts of India.

Over the centuries, there was a division of work between Pandits and Muslims. As the Pandits mastered the language of their rulers (Persian) they got petty jobs with the government at the behest of the ruling class. But the Muslims confined themselves to agriculture, crafts and trade. With the advent of the British, the

Pandits took to English education. The Muslims, on the other hand, refused to learn English and remained backward. As a result, they lost not only job opportunities but also opportunities in industry and commerce. This led to jealousy and hard feelings, which were unwarranted, for the Pandits did not snatch away the jobs of the Muslims. And yet the Muslims occupied most of the jobs in the state service, although only a small proportion among them was literate. Even in recent years, there has been less competition from Muslims for the well-paid higher jobs because highly educated Muslims are still rare.

With the growth of fundamentalism in the Valley, it was clear that the fate of the Pandits was sealed, for no fundamentalist Muslim will agree to co-exist with communities of other faiths. The presence of an orthodox educated Brahmin community was a constant challenge to these fundamentalists, who saw in them a major obstacle to the establishment of "Nizam-e-Mustafa" (Islamic rule) in Kashmir.

Yet, at no point of time in the history of Islam have Muslims been able to establish any such ideal rule anywhere in the world. Even today, some Muslim societies remain steeped in ignorance and are unable to catch up with the rest of the world.

In Kashmir, the fundamentalists have been trying to wean away the converts from their past and this process has been going on for centuries. So, what the Pandit thinks are the greatest achievements of his Kashmiri ancestors are anathema to the converts. They produce feelings of guilt in them. To talk of a common culture, a "Kashmiriat", is to live in a make-believe world in these circumstances, for there is little that is held in equal esteem by both. On the other hand, what brings pride to the fundamentalists are the achievements of Islam[4].

A demographic change has taken place by hounding Kashmir Pandits out on the basis of faith and loyalty. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in his autobiography "Aatish-e-Chinaar", Chinar on Fire says pandits are spies of India; as such they are like the fifth column; and they never supported mainstream Muslim nationalism. The autobiography was an accusation. It was Sheikh Abdullah who created a philosophy of separatism. From

this emerged the philosophy of weapons. The militancy of today is a by-product of that. It was during his period that the Madarsas and Maktabas run by the Jamat-e-Islami started indoctrination of separatism systematically. During his chief ministership the nomenclature of more than 800 villages of Kashmir was changed, they were Islamised.

In Jammu alone, nearly 1,500 migrant pandit families, about 1.5 lakh people, are still living in tents. There are similar camps in Udhampur, Muthi, Purkhoo, Negrota, batalbalai etc. Living in utter neglect, apathy, no medical aid, no school, no security. Any one can come anytime and wipe them. The people are dying unnoticed. They are facing threat of extinction. According to a National Human Rights Commission report, death rate in camps have gone up. People are being forced to sell their property in Kashmir at throwaway prices. At the time of exodus about 12,000 Kashmiri pandits were in state government employment. Of this, more than 5,000 have already retired and no fresh recruitment of Pandits has taken place. There will be no pandit in state employment by the year 2008. Thus there is ethnic cleansing in the administration, too.

An entire Kashmiri Pandit community has been thrown out on the basis of religion. People who are running the separatist movement has rejected religious co-existence in Kashmir. As a community pandits are reiterating their demand for free flow of Indian constitution, which is not a communal but a secular Constitution. Indian Constitution guarantees equal rights, enables every citizen to live with dignity.

CONCLUSION

The Hindus, particularly the Kashmir Pandits have all along been the whipping boy[5] in Kashmir. Sultan Sikander Butshikan unleased his fury on them, when many of them were killed and had to spread out to plains. In an attempt to adjust to the circumstances, they used their brain as they lacked brawn and also strength of numbers. They mastered languages. Like English, Urdu, Persian and Arabic. In time the they secured respectable jobs. Such phases however are temporary only.

The partition of the country was another blow to all Hindus who had hearth and home in areas now known as Pakistan. However the Hindus in Kashmir, though in India faced uncertainty and discrimination. Then there was a short period of two decades of peace. But it was lull before storm.

A full fury of terrorism was let out in Punjab through misguided Sikh youths but the latter realised in time that they were being used as cat's paw by Pakistan. Terrorism fizzled out in Punjab thanks to the effective mass contact by the Govt.

The case of Kashmir is different from Punjab. As the local population is predominantly Muslim, it is easy to exploit them in the name of religion. Further, the terrorists also find it convenient to melt into the locals physically, culturally and linguistically. Poverty is another factor which make them amenable to financial lures.

Anyhow the terrorism in Kashmir and particularly the may hem let loose on Kashmiri Pandits appears to be far more ferocious than ever. It is not an ethnic cleansing only but a ruthless and cruel purge, which has to stop. The authorities should pay serious attention to it. Just as we have been collecting defence fund during wars, Govt. should float some scheme, let us say anti-terrorism fund. The financial powering may not be very substantial but the resultant awareness in masses will pay dividends soon.

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5. A boy formerly educated with a prince and punished in his stead.

16

Valley, The Rishivae

The Kashmir Valley, long known as the Rishivae or Garden of Rishis, had a turbulent history of internal strife and foreign invasion, it has also borne holy men and women who preached a humane belief in the uniform treatment of people belonging to different faiths, and a conviction that there was a single God beyond sectarian divisions. True mystics as they were, their sayings, mostly in verse, emphasise ecumenical thinking.

It was in the Valley that Muslim ascetics established the Rishi order, notwithstanding the fact that the concept of a Rishi is alien to Islam. On the other hand, Hindu saints did not shy away from associating with Muslim sages. The common goal of both was the realisation of the self.

All religions revolve around the realisation of the cosmic Self by the individual self, and the means by which this realisation is to be achieved. In the phraseology of the Vedanta, the quest for Self-realisation entails a journey beset with hardships and hurdles that the jivatman, or the individual soul, must undergo in order to merge in the Parmatman or the Absolute Soul.

The Vedanta teaches that the seeker of truth or Brahman must possess six qualities: Sama, a calm mind that does not wander; Dama, control of the senses, celibacy or continence; uparati, self-denial and concentration of mind; titiksha, the regulation of the ego through the practice of forbearance and forgiveness; shraddha, an unbiased or receptive mind with an earnest regard for the Vedic learning; samadhana, the practice

of undisturbed mediation. One of the time-honoured ways of subjecting oneself to such discipline and cultivating the virtues of self-restraint is by setting out on a teerthayatra or pilgrimage.

The concept of a pilgrimage is central to all the major faiths of the world: Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem, Amarnath, Vaishnodevi, Kailash Mansrover, and Sabarimalai are only a few of the destinations to which pilgrims dedicate themselves across the globe. The teerthayatra offers the jivatman a chance to discipline itself and find out if it has reached the stage where it can live without the help of carnal pleasures. It enables the jivatman to renounce worldly comforts and live like a hermit. This was perhaps the purpose behind the establishment of the teertha sthanas in mountainous and other difficult terrain, where the pilgrim could not surround himself with the amenities and luxuries that we take for granted in normal life .

It is one of the sad results of scientific as well as philosophic research, that we become deeply aware of the transient nature of the multitude of forms, which constitute a universe. We are forced to meditate upon the fact of mortality and are sometimes appalled by the idea of the futility of all human endeavours. Hence the existence of every religion.

One such religious saint was Lal Ded. Born to a Brahmin family in the region of Pampore near Srinagar, this 14th century saint was drawn towards spirituality from a very young age. She did not believe in idol worship, sacrifices and the other rituals her clan indulged in, nor did she discriminate between a Hindu and a Muslim or the rich and the poor.

In one of her sayings - called Vaakh - she says: "Shiva is everywhere, do not discriminate between Hindus and Muslims (He is present in both). If you are intelligent, realise yourself: that will introduce you to God".

All humans were equal for her, irrespective of caste, creed, social status and belief. Spiritual awakening brought about by the knowledge imparted to her by her guru Siddha Shrikanth had freed her of all bonds and she had lost the sense that she was living in society.

Since her guru taught her the ultimate Truth, she sings, she began to wander around clad in nothing because clothes had lost their importance, as self-realisation became her sole objective in life.

"I gave up lying and deceiving and taught myself to see the Absolute in everyone", she says, "Now I accept food from whoever offers it to me (be that person a Hindu or a Muslim or belonging to any other religion)".

There are some anecdotes popular in Kashmir about Lal Ded's Association with Sayyid Ali Hamadani and Sheikh Noorudin Noorani (Nund rishi, the founder of the Rishi order). While it has not been proved that she met the former, there is hardly any doubt expressed by scholars about her association with Nund Rishi.

It is said that when Nund rishi was born, he refused to suckle his mother. Lal Ded on hearing this, went to his house and said to the infant: "If you were not ashamed of coming into the world, why do you fight shy of drinking your mother's milk"? Nund rishi, on hearing her words, started sucking his mother's breast.

Lal Ded did not approve of this dietary preference and upbraided a Brahmin who was taking a sheep to the butcher's: "This animal hides your shame and gives you warmth, it eats grass and drinks water. Should you make a meal of it"?

Lal Ded was an ascetic of a very high order, a yogini, a majnuni aqila (madwoman in love of God), a Rabia Sania (a second Rabia). Her sayings will never date.

She is as relevant today as she is as was 600 years ago. It makes one weep that some among the people who call her Lal Moj (Mother Lal) - people who constantly have her vaakh on their lips - have lost respect for her memory. They have forgotten the spiritual and ecumenical legacy bequeathed to them by their saints, and plunged the Valley into bloodbath.

Kashmir, the land of Sufis and saints, has also produced eminent scholars. Their work was recognised by western scholars,

but, unfortunately, it remained unrecognised in their own homeland. When no attention was paid to the work of Kashmiri scholars by the authorities concerned, they began to interact with western scholars and this association lasted for 65 years (1875 to 1940).

In 1889, Kashmiri scholars' work came into the limelight when Dr. Mark Aurel Stein required help for translating Rajtarangani into Sanskrit by using the Devnagri script. Rajtarangani was written in the Sharda script of the 11th century.

Sharda is the real identity of Kashmir. The valley was called Shardha Peetha for many centuries. Those who talk about Kashmir and Kashmiriat forget that in practice they are following an alien culture, which has nothing to do with Kashmir, Kashmiri language and Kashmiriat . Pt. Govind Koul and Pt. Mukand Ram Shastri were identified for this work. With the help of these two prominent scholars, the translated version of Rajtarangani was edited and published in 1892 from Bombay. During this period, Aurel Stein came in contact with other Kashmiri Brahmin scholars also.

George Grierson was impressed by the high philosophical content and linguist richness of Lalla Vaakh (Lal Ded or Lalla Yogeshwari was a popular 14th century Kashmiri saint poetess). Vaakh travelled from one generation to another by word of mouth. No manuscript was available. In 1914, Grierson assigned Pt. Mukand Ram Shastri the task of noting down the entire Lalla Waakh. Pt. Mukand Ram located a saint, Dharam Dass Darvesh of Gucchgam, who had learnt Lalla Vaakh by heart. Pt Mukand Ram Shastri recorded the waakh from Darvesh and handed it over to Grierson.

When Sir Richard Carnac Temple, a British Indologist, edited the sayings of Lal Ded, he traced Pt. Mukand Ram's genealogy as well and described him thus. "Pt. Mukand Ram Shastri was a living pupil in the line of descendent of the founder of the Kashmiri Shaivism Acharya Abhanav Gupta.

The home of Kashmir Shaivism is the valley of Kashmir, India, a region of breathtaking beauty. One hundred miles long

and 75 miles wide at its broadest, and 5, 500 feet above sea level, majestic mountains surround the valley. This terrain isolates Kashmir from the tropical Indian subcontinent, providing it with a mild and temperate climate. Since ancient times the Kashmir Valley has offered royalty and the wealthy a refuge from the oppressive heat of Indian springs and summers. It has been a heaven to philosophers and the spiritually minded people .

Swami Lakshman Joo a great scholar saint's home was nestled against the mountain range at the southeast corner of the valley Johen Hughes in his book "Self Realisation in Kashmir Shaivism", writes:

Although his home was referred to as the ashram and had that pure and uplifting atmosphere common to holy places, it was actually his private residence. His home echoed the physical splendor of Kashmir. From his garden one could behold the panorama of the valley the enchanting Dal Lake, and the edge of deep wilderness. In harmony with this natural beauty was Swamiji's careful touch upon the terrain.

CONCLUSION

Kashmir Shaivism is the most prominent system of the Tantric tradition, it is central philosophy of Tantrism. The contribution of Tantra to Indian philosophy and culture is of immense significance. Moreover, the Tantras, have something significant and relevant to say to modern humanity. With its positive attitude towards the world and its variety of Yogic sadhanas for self-improvement in all respects, Tantra carries a promise of help to people in their present predicament. However, the present predicament of the uprooted Kashmiri Pandits is as how to keep Rishivae alive in the valley in content and spirit.

Kashmir is aptly known as Garden of Rishis. Its beauty is unsurpassed, a fact well known throughout the world. It is not only tourists' paradise but is also a place of pilgrimage. Throbbing with spirituality.

Lal Ded was a great woman saint of 14th Century. She was a woman mad in love of God. In other words, she was a fully self-realised saint. Like all exalted saints of such dizzy spiritual

stature, she did not believe in caste, creed or ritualistic aspects of religions.

Her Vaak, is the collection of her sayings and contains spiritual nuggets suited to all time and clime.

Kashmir Shaivism is also known for its Tantrism, which is the approach to God-realisation through merger of Shakti with Shiva. Ramakrishna Paramahansa used Tantra to realise God but his main approach was reaching Him through the Divine Mother aspect. The Kashmiri Pandits are keeping their spiritual tradition alive despite adverse circumstances prevailing in the valley and their exodus.

17

Appraisal and Sum Up

The word "secular state" unfortunately is being used as opposed to a theocratic state. The adoption of this word is a mere imitation of the western thought-pattern. We had no need to import it. We called it a secular state to contrast it with Pakistan. There is some misunderstanding arising out of this. Religion was equated with Dharma, and then Secular State was meant to be a state without Dharma duty. Some said, ours is a (nidharmi) state (without Dharma), whereas others trying to find a better sounding word called it (indifferent to Dharma) State.

But all these words are fundamentally erroneous. For, a state can neither be without dharma nor can it be indifferent to Dharma, just as the fire cannot be without heat. If fire loses heat, it, does not remain fire any longer. State, which exists fundamentally to maintain Dharma, to maintain law and order, can neither be (Nirdharmi) nor (Dharam-nirpakeshata).

Most of our leaders fell a prey to sheer antagonism neither to the British or to the Muslim, with the result that they have become either Anglicised or Muslimised. They repeatedly recounted the harrowing tales of the blood-curdling massacres, forcible conversions, raping of women, desecration of temples and all such atrocities perpetrated on Hinduism by the Muslims ever since they stepped on this soil.

Though Hinduism starts with the basic conviction that man is essentially divine and this divinity is immanent in all creation, animate or inanimate, in a more or less manifest form. And it is

the realisation of this divine nature in himself that invests man with the highest and everlasting joy. That this conviction is not a mere blind belief but a matter of living experience has been borne out by the effluent lives of spiritual masters right from the ancient Upanishadic seers to a Ramakrishna Paramahansa and a Ramana Maharshi in modern times.

This inherent divinity can be made manifest by following certain disciplines in life. It is common knowledge that no talent or faculty in man can be developed without following certain do's and do nots suited for that field. The disciplines or the laws of life which man, in order to express his innate divinity, has to follow with relations to all his relationships are compendiously called Dharma . And Dharma is not religion.

Hinduism is much more than a religion. Religion gets exploited when power is sought using religion in order to pursue goals that are non-religious or outright anti-religious. When one displays religiosity in political life to establish religious credentials, but pursues just the opposite it is exploitation of religion and manipulation of theistic people and is adharma. Dharma is the soul of religion. Dharma is the soul and religion is the body. They have no real meaning without each other. Religion is the soul of civilisation. Religion is the soul and civilisation is the body. They have no meaning without each other. Civilisation is the soul of nation. Civilisation is the soul and nation is its vehicle they have no meaning without each other.

Hinduism is a civilisation or way of life and not strictly a religion in a traditional sense of the word. Since civilisation is but a manifestation of religion, Hinduism do have religion connotations in such context and it is so because Hinduism is a civilisation.

That is why Hinduism also have Dharmic, national and territorial connotations too. When Hinduism is de-linked from the, duty, Dharmic, religious, civilisational, national and territorial connotations and confined merely as a mode of worship or temple-affair, then serious reductionism takes place. This has been the real cause of disintegration of Dharma, religion, civilization, nation and territories because its binding force has been de-linked.

Hinduism has a conglomeration of many paths, panths, margs, schools of thoughts, modes of worships, each so distinct and yet, only an offshoot of the same tree that is Sanatan Dharma and Veda. Even when they do not follow or agree with Veda or with other paths, they are nonetheless only an off-shoot of the family of Sanatan Dharma. If Veda, or Sanatan Dharma or Hinduism were to perish, they all would perish together. Each one's existence pre-supposes the existence of something that is part of Hinduism and each one's survival pre-supposes the survival of something that is part and parcel of Hinduism.

With Hinduism as a civilisation, they all get be fitting expression. With Hinduism as strictly religion, each gets fractionalized isolated, alienated, separated out and neutralized. So this has been one ramification of Hinduism being classified as a strictly religion.

Another ramification has been that religion gets de-linked from civilization and nation. This has allowed all the anti-Hindu political ideologies to lay a siege on all the civilisational components for de-engineering them is their favour. Its territories are looted left and right. Its environmental sphere has been razed to the desert. Its family and community institutions have been put through divide and destroy mechanisms. Its nation had been subjected to many-nations, no-nation, two-nation theories to implement alien nation theories. Its cultural sphere has been banned and superimposed with antithetical models. Its political field has been taken over by crooks, criminals and alienated demagogues who have been following the loot and scorch-the-civilisation policy. It has allowed them to turn India into a factory for producing an alienated and hate-Hindu generations. It has made it impossible to preserve Hinduism as religion too. Thus, from both sides, this seemingly simple reductionism trick has played havoc with Hinduism.

On top of attacks and subversions directed at Hindu civilisation, the unfriendly elements engage in blackmail to prevent Hindus from seeking redress or asserting the civilization. This is where Islamic fundamentalism plays its role. Many pit assertions of Hindu civilisation against the ambitions of Islamic civilization. While Hindu civilization is attacked from all angels, they appease

encourage, strengthen, politically emancipate the Islamic notions of civilizations. They set their confrontations and then try to fuel their own ideology by presiding over confrontations. They appease and compromise Islamists on behalf of Hindus as if it represents the Hindus. They have restored to Stalinism, Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism wherever their powers have been challenged by different ideological force. A continuous siege is created around Hinduism.

India's Dharma, her eternal quest for truth, should be drilled in the child from an early age. And from this firm base, everything then can be taught - from the most modern forms of mathematics, to the latest scientific technologies.

Children should be taught to revere the Vedas, and they should be taught to admire the genius of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. [Francois Gautier, in an article "Haunted by Macaulay's ghost", elaborates:

Hinduism is a way of life, a universal spiritual outlook, which has allowed numerous sects, branches, philosophies, to develop within its fold, as long as they were faithful to the central truth of Hinduism: Dharma.

Hinduism has not only shaped the psyche of Hindus, but also of Indian Christians, Jains, Parsis, even Muslims who are like no other Muslims in the world. And why should Indians be ashamed of their own civilisation whose greatness was foremost Hindu? Why should they refuse to have their children read the Vedas, which constitute one of the great fountains of spiritual wisdom, or the *Bhagavad Gita*, which contains all the secrets of eternal life? Or the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, which teach the great values of human nature: courage, selflessness, and spiritual endeavour, love of one's wife and neighbours.

When they took over India, the British set about establishing an intermediary race of Indians, whom they could entrust with their work at the middle level echelons and who could one day be convenient instruments to rule by proxy or semi-proxy. The tool to shape these "British clones" was education. In the words of Macaulay, the 'Pope' of British schooling in India:

"We must at present do our best to form a class, who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern; a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellects".

Macaulay had very little regard for Hindu culture and education: "All the historical information which can be collected from all the books which have been written in the Sanskrit language, is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgement used at preparatory schools in England".

It seems today that India's Marxist and Muslim intelligentsia could not agree more with Macaulay or with Charles Grant for the dream of Macaulay has come true. Now a days, the greatest adversaries of the "Indianised and spiritualized education" of Murli Manohar Joshi, are the descendants of these 'Brown Sahibs' the 'secular' politicians, the journalists, the top bureaucrats, in fact the whole Westernized cream of India. And what is even more paradoxical, is that most of them are Hindus. It is they who upon getting independence, have denied India its true identity and borrowed blindly from the British education system, without trying to adapt it to the unique Indian mentality and psychology; and it is they who are refusing to accept "an Indianisation, nationalization and spiritualisation" of India's education system, which is totally western-oriented. And what India is getting from this education is a youth which apes the West .

Secularism in India has been made so sacred that no one rejecting that ideology can successfully fight elections at present. The essence of this Secularism is anti-Hinduism, and if any candidate today openly declares that he considers Hindus to be a nation, that he wishes to save the Hindus and fight for their interests, that he aims at freedom of the Hindus and seeks their support, his right to be elected stands forfeited. Even if he succeeds in the polls, the courts will declare his election null and void on the ground of 'communalism.

The entire Hindu population of the Valley of Kashmir, a province of our own country, has been languishing for the last more than ten years in makeshift tents. In the face of inhuman cruelty and terror inflicted by Muslims, these people had to leave

their hearths and homes, their property and livelihood. They had to flee the homeland of their ancestors and take shelter in refugee camps. After they left, the Muslims looted and burnt their houses. During these ten years, there have been five Prime Ministers in the country, but not one of them had a day's time or the decency to even visit any of these camps.

About one lakh Hindus - Sahajdharis and Sikhs - who had fled Pakistan during the post-partition carnage in 1947 and taken shelter in the State of Jammu & Kashmir, have not been granted state citizenship till this day. They have no right to vote in the elections to the state legislature and the panchayats, no right to get loans etc. from government institutions, no right to get their children admitted in the medical and engineering colleges of the State. There is no State today, certainly not in India, to protect Hindu interests in the international arena, to raise voice for the Hindus.

A nation indicates a group or community of people which has been traditionally living in a particular land, which has its own distinctive culture, and which has an identity separate from other peoples of the world by virtue of the distinctiveness of its culture.

There may be internal differences in several respects among the people belonging to this culture, but in spite of these differences there is an overall sense of harmony born out of the fundamental elements of their culture, and a sense of pride which inspires in them a desire to maintain their separate identity from the rest of the world.

Finally, as a result of these factors, this group of people has its own outlook towards the history of its traditional homeland; it has its own heroes and villains, its own view of glory and shame success and failure, victory and defeat.

A community of people which possesses the above features is a Nation, and the country in which it has been traditionally living, and where it has developed its distinct culture, is called the Motherland of that nation, its Traditional Homeland.

As Sri Aurobindo had said, "A nation is indeed the outward expression of a community of sentiments whether it be the

sentiment of a common blood, or the sentiment of a common religion, or the sentiment of a common interest, or any or all of these sentiments combined".

The distinctiveness of the Hindu culture gives us a markedly separate identity quite apart from the rest of the world. And the distinctive culture of our nation is the Sanatana Dharma. This Sanatana dharma has any number of branches and offshoots. There are, in fact, an immense number of forms and variations of the vast vision of Sanatana Dharma, but through all these forms and variations flows an underlying current of shared spirituality which makes us all Hindus and gives us an intrinsic sense of harmony.

The Hindu religion is a pluralistic tradition that accepts many paths, teachers, scriptures and teachings. One cannot be a Christian without accepting Christ or a Buddhist without accepting Buddha, but one can be a Hindu without accepting any single figure. In fact there are Hindus who may not follow Krishna, Rama, Shiva, Vishnu or other Hindu sages or deities and still count as Hindu. Hindus have been at the forefront in arguing for the cause of religious diversity and the acceptance of pluralism in religion, rejecting the idea that any single religion alone can be true .

There are many points of difference within the Hindu fold, caused by caste, language and regional tradition. But the fundamental sense of Hindu identity, unity, and harmony cuts through all differences and prevails over the community on account of the common spiritual current of the Sanatana Dharma. Thus it is the Sanatana Dharma which is the distinguishing feature of the Hindu nation.

The festivals heralding four clear-cut seasons in the valley of Kashmir are occasions for mery-making, outings and enjoyment. And, those festivals connected with different faiths have devotional and ritual content.

Each community in Kashmir has individual superstitions, based on their conscious and unconscious minds. Superstitions in the Hindu community have tantric influences. Their implemen-

tation in daily life becomes almost an obsession. These have effect on their customs, and festivities, births, deaths, marriages, professional plans, travel plans, etc. It is a good omen to see an inkpot, a book, paddy, bread, milk, yoghurt, coin-first thing in the morning. But seeing a cat, a donkey, oil-container, a broom, a comb, does not augur well. Horoscopes of the boy and the girl have to be matched before marriage talk even begins.

The Muslims tie Taviz (amulets) sanctified by religious men, around their children's arms, writs, neck and head, as a protection against bad luck or to nullify the effect of an 'evil eye'. While the older people indoctrinate children to obey these superstitions, the young question them as irrational impositions. Nevertheless, folk beliefs do not die that easily for, they are ingrained in the social system one is born and nurtured into . Folklore - as in the rest of India is the "myths of the race", the natural intermingles with the supernatural. The folklore of Kashmir Valley Jammu and the surrounding areas - consists of folktales, folk-songs, ballads, proverbs and riddles. This provides the means of creative self-expression, myths, customs, etc.

Folklore presents an interesting and colourful spectrum. In the folklore of Kashmir Valley is embodied the heritage of the people's dynamic, though chequered past, as well as the spirit of beauty.

The mystic language of the Tantras and the rich symbolism found therein-present difficulties in the exposition of Tantric thought. Abhinavagupta, the principal philosopher of Kashmir Shaivism, overcame these difficulties to make a systematic and rational presentation of Tantric wisdom in his famous work, the Tantraloka. Some of the basic principles of the Tantric system are questioned and contradicted by Advaita Vedanta . In defense, the Tantrist would not only justify him or herself but would in turn counter-question the Advaitin. The aim is simply to clarify the position.

The traditional homeland of Hindus is the Bharatavarsha. It is a quite distinct geographical entity. There are few nations in the world the natural boundaries of whose homeland are as clearly drawn as that of ours. Mother Nature has herself created

and bequeathed to us, as it were, the separate land of Baratavarsha enclosed by the Himalayas and the Hindukush, the Indian Ocean, the Arab Sea and the Bay of Bengal. It appears as if nature, or the Supreme Being, has specially created this country as the motherland of a particular nation. And the Hindus have been intimately associated with this land, lived on it, developed their culture and civilization on it, and regarded it as sacred soil for at least 6000 years if not many more.

The one bitter truth that we have to acknowledge is that we remained subjugated for about a thousand years when foreign invaders ruled over our country. By use of barbaric persecution or economic inducements, they compelled certain segments of our nation to abandon their ancestral culture and adopt the culture of those foreign invaders. More tragically, after a few generations passed, these hapless people forgot that the culture they had adopted was a foreign culture, a culture that belonged to another nation and had been forced on them. They started regarding the alien culture as their own, developed an affinity with it, and identified themselves with it. Foreign domination thus led to the twin misfortune of our losing control. over some parts of our traditional homeland, and some segments of our nation getting fractured away from the rest of us.

But subjugation does not by itself destroy the nationhood of a nation. Nor does the nature of the nation, the basic characteristic and disposition of the nation, get changed by the fact of enslavement.

The situation is no different in Bangladesh. It emerged as an independent entity with the help of India as a secular state but soon turned out to be an Islamic state. The Chakma Buddhist and Hindu Minorities were squeezed to the point of death. Kashmiri pandits have convinced themselves that in which ever part of the country, the Muslims form majority, it turns out to be Islamic fundamentalist intolerant and the ethnic cleansing ensues till the Sufi and Shaiva believers are sieged and silenced. The area remain Islamic fundamental in content secular on surface only.

Epilogue*

Kashmir Shaivism is a proper philosophy. It is not a mere ideology but a magnificent system of spirituality itself. Kashmir Shaivism since its inception, has emphasised not only the understanding of its concepts but also the direct realisation of its truth. Truth cannot be grasped by mere intellect; it can only be apprehended through direct experience.

Experience is merely whatever happens to us, whatever occurs. The confused mind views experience that arises of a cognitive contact as permanent, with an inherent existence from its own side. It confuses the experiences and appearances that arise out of beauty, wealth, fame, and power to be of a different substance than those arising out of anger, hatred and despair. The path that leads to unconfused and clear states of mind, is the Dharma way. The state where all sufferings cease through the cultivation of a clear state of mind, is Nirvana. Kashmir Shaivism is the path of self-realisation.

The tradition of Kashmir Shaivism, though very old, was made known by the late Prof. Buhler, to the western world, in his "report on the search for Sanskrit manuscripts", (as mentioned in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bombay (1877), extra number, Cp. Bhandarkar, Vaishnavism, Shaivism, etc., p. 129). The practices of this system are based on Agama Shastra and Shvetashvetra Upanishad, however, their origin and literary contexts, being much older, do not provide any clue associated

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with its origin. The collections of Shiva Sutras are ascribed to Lord Shiva himself as their author. It is believed that a holy sage Vasugupta, who lived around 800 AD near Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir received the revelations direct from Lord Shiva. Among the disciples of Vasugupta, Kallata, the famous author of Spanda Shastra, his disciple Somananda followed by Utpala developed Pratyabhijna Shastra and other texts of great unimportance.

The literature relating to the system, which arose in the ninth century AD is known as Trika Shasana (triple instruction) as it deals mainly with three main themes, namely, Shiva, Shakti and soul (anu). These are also called Pati (Lord), Pash (bond) and Pashu (cattle).

According to an inscription from Kangra District (probable date 804 AD) dedicated to Pashupati, the lord who cuts the pashas (bonds) of his worshippers, establish this cult remained in existence even in adjoining hill regions also.

According to Dr. Balji Nath Pandit, a renowned scholar of Kashmir Shaivism, Kangra Dham, the earlier Headquarters of Jalandhar peeth, was a spirituality vibrating centre of Kashmir Shaivism at one time and the great gurus of this system stayed at Jalandhar peeth and surrounding areas for sometime.

According to Buhler and some other scholars, the famous treatise of Tantraloka, was written by Abhinavgupta around 1000 AD Para.

Pashyanti stages get manifested at the will of the Shakti. J. Estlin carpenter in his book "Theism in Medieval India" rightly points out by saying, "The aim of religion is to secure release; and its method is to disperse the imagination of duality. Destroy the sense of ownership which prompts the phrase 'my body'; cease to identity corporeal states with the soul as though it could be hungry and lean; abandon the notion of personal merit gained by good works - this is the way to conquer the clinging to individuality, the craving for satisfaction, the claim to happiness. ... The poor fettered soul (pashu) breaks its bonds (pasha), realises its true nature, and becomes one with the lord (pati). When the

illusion of differentiation is dispelled, the passions, wrath, lust, avarice, conceit, and all their crew, vanish forever"[1].

The oral tradition of Kashmir Shaivism has been preserved and strengthened by scholars and saints of Kashmir. Dedicated saints fully imbibed the teachings and practices of Kashmir Shaivism and were looked upon as the embodiment of kindness, generosity and compassion. The compassionate one transcends the boundaries of ritualistic religion and realizes the undivided, absolute Reality. If we follow religion without practicing the Truth, it is like the blind leading the blind. Those who belong to God love all. Love is the only religion of the universe.

Self-realisation is in fact the aim of all religions of Indian origin. Here self means the absolute. In Shaivism it is Shiva, who is highest transcendental experience in super consciousness. It is possible only if the mind is emptied not only of impure thoughts but also of all contents. The fact that Kashmir Shaivism has survived so much tough-and-tumble, is testimony to the fact that all along the line there have been Kashmiri saints and sages of highest self-realisation. The chain of such saints kept themselves busy in the study and experience of Kashmir Shaivism.

Guru Nanak, the first of the ten Sikh Gurus and founder of the Sikh religion, was a pioneer of secularism who brought a vision of one humanity - a vision which transcended over class, caste, race, faith and gender and gave the torn society of his time the message of tolerance, goodwill and compassion. His ninth successor, Guru Teg Bahadur, zealously protected the secular ideal. He made the supreme sacrifice of his life in order to uphold human dignity and everyone's right to unfettered freedom to practise one's chosen faith.

When new policy was first launched in 1669, by Aurangzeb there was wide-spread panic in the country among the non-Muslims. The reports of this panic reached Guru Tegh Bahadur while in Assam and he immediately took the decision of being with his people in their hour of great agony and suffering.

With the return of the Guru to the Punjab began the period of his crowning glory. Refusing to sit idle at his Headquarters, he resolved to move among his people. During his travels, large

crowds of people gathered around him and sought solace and guidance from him. His exhortation to them was to face the situation with courage and firmness. His motto, *"bhai kahu ko det nahi nahi bhai manat an"* (fear not, frighten not) had deep effect on the panic-stricken minds of the people.

Guru Teg Bahadur was a godly and compassionate. He wrote sublime poetry of eternal truth and beauty, which is preserved in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the holy Sikh scripture. To this day he is remembered as Hind Ki Chaddar i.e. Protector of religious freedom in India. To quote Bhai Santokh Singh:

> "Who like him there was in the world.
> who sacrificed his head that others might live".

During his time, the Hindus and Sikhs groaned under Emperor Aurangzeb's fanaticism and his campaign for the forcible conversion of all non-Muslims to Islam. The impact of forced conversions was severe in northern India, particularly in Kashmir and Punjab. For the Kashmiri Pandits, the world was gloomy and dark because their sacred threads (janeus) were being forcibly taken off their person. In Guru Teg Bahadur they saw a bright, shining hope that could help them come out of this life of misery. A group of five hundred of them came to Anandpur Sahib, where the Guru resided, to seek his help. They implored him to preserve the honour of their faith telling him all about their sad plight.

The guru was most distressed to hear their woeful cry. He sat pondering how to respond. Seeing his father in a pensive mood, his eight-year-old son, Gobind Rai, asked him the reason for his worry. The Guru said, "Only brave man who is willing to sacrifice his life shall free the Kashmiri Pandits from the cruel oppression".

"For that purpose who is more worthy than yourself who is at once generous and brave", remarked the young child who later become the tenth Sikh guru, guru Gobind Singh. When Guru Tegh Bahadur heard this from his child, he resolved to lay down his life to uphold the right of the people to their belief and told the group of Pandits that "I shall ask the emperor first to try and convert me, who am now seated on the throne of the great Guru Nanak, the protector of faith and religion".

Thus Guru Teg Bahadur at a critical time in our history challenged the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb's oppressive and intolerant policy of making Islam the sole religion in his kingdom. His move infused courage into the hearts of millions of persecuted people who wished to live a life of freedom.

The sense of mission with which he undertook his extensive tour of the countryside and deep impact of his teachings on the people alarmed the official circles. Soon after this, the Guru was arrested along with a few of his most devoted followers. They were taken to Delhi where they were charged with dangerous activities. They were offered a choice between Islam and death, and on their spurning conversion outright, the Guru was beheaded whereas his companions, Bhai Dayal and Bhai Mati Das, were boiled and sawn alive respectively[2].

Guru Teg Bahadur thus died a people's hero, a defender of his faith, and a fighter against insensate tyranny. In the words of Guru Gobind Singh, son and successor of Guru Teg Bahadur:

"To protect their right to wear their caste marks and sacred threads

Did he, in the Dark Age, perform, the supreme sacrifice;
To help the saintly he went to the utmost limit;
He gave his head but never cried in pain,
He suffered martyrdom for the sake of his faith;
He lost his head, but revealed not his secret;
He disdained to perform miracles or jugglers' tricks,
For such fill men of God with shame;
He burst the bonds of mortal clay
And went to the abode of God,
No one hath ever performed an act as noble as his.
Teg Bahadur passed, the world was with sorrow stricken;
A wail of horror rent the earth;
A victor's welcome given by the hosts of heaven"[3].

Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and the last Sikh Guru wrote about the martyrdom in his early short autobiography, Bachittar Natak:

In this kali age, he performed a great deed;
He made the supreme sacrifice for the sake of the men of faith.
He gave his head, but uttered not a groan.
This martyrdom he endured to uphold righteousness...
A deed like Teg Bahadur's none had dared before.
At the departure of Teg Bahadur,
The world was enwrapped in mourning...
In the sphere of the gods rang out shouts of adoration.

After about 326 years of the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the condition of the Non-Muslims, more particularly the Kashmiri Pandits has become worst & unbearable. The "Holy War", declared by the fundamentalists has taken unholy turns. After exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits and the Sikhs, the fundamentalists have pounced upon the women. The Lashkar-e-Jabber, a group that had thrown acid over the faces of unveiled women, defacing two and had set September 1, 2001 as the deadline for women to adopt the Islamic dress-code -covering themselves with *Burqa*, a veil.

It may be recalled that in Iran after women had been put under the Veil of *Burqa*, then only Government realised that the women were easily expandable commodities. The *Burqa* wearing were used to mine exploding and sweeping during the war with Iraq. The Taliban Government too has made the *Burqa* compulsory for women in Afghanistan.

The fundamentalists wish to create Afghanistan like situation in Kashmir. Taliban hold over Afghanistan can bring nothing but destruction, chaos and obscurantism to this part of the world, rendering any creative collaboration a futile exercise.

Far from yielding economic promise, it is Islamic fundamentalism that has reared its head in the form of Osama Bin Laden, who places United States as Islam's worst enemy and countries such as India come only next in his "jehadi" plans. Most of the militants training for jehad come from impoverished families, but funds are made freely available, from domestic donations as well as from rich Arab countries like Saudi Arabia.

The philosophy that is taught in the madrassa is simple: Islam is in danger throughout the world, that USA, Russia, India and Israel are Satan's agents. The Jehadi outfits in Pakistan keep close links with militant groups abroad, as in the United Kingdom, USA and other western countries. This has prompted the British government to ban twenty such organisations.

For India, secularism is the foundation of its democracy and its strength and stability. In that sense, Kashmir is for India the 'core issue'. Indian democracy would not survive for long if secularism is compromised. Another division of the country on the basis of religion and 'transfer' of population is unthinkable. It will destroy whatever peace and stability has been achieved on the sub-continent in the last fifty-five years.

The world of Taliban mirrors the dark medieval age. It is as far removed as can be imagined from the sunlit uplands of enlightenment, refinement, culture and civilisation. It thrives on bigotry and hate in a blighted ostracized land. Even before the mullahs of Afghanistan begin their orgy of destruction aimed at the priceless status of Buddha in Bamiyan, the country was known to be beyond the pale of civilisation in its attitude towards women, modern scientific education and relations with other countries. What prevailed there was a replay of a repressive society from centuries ago where the only law was the whim of the clergy.

The resurgence of fanatical religious fervour occurring in many lands cannot be regarded as more than a dying convulsion. The very nature of the violent and disruptive phenomena associated with it testifies to the spiritual bankruptcy it represents.

Verily, it seems, world will never forgive the present Taliban leadership in Afghanistan for destroying the Buddha statues with mortars and sockets.

If the rest of the world tended to turn away from the depressing sight, it was because of the belief that all countries must be allowed to choose their own destiny.

As long as Taliban imposed its medievalism on its own people, the indifference of the International community was understandable. The only concern that was expressed was when

it sent out jehadis to fight religious wars in Kashmir, Chechnya and elsewhere. But while the menace posed by these terrorists can be countered, one can only watch in horror the mindless onslaught on the heritage of the past, which belongs not to Afghanistan alone but to the whole world. It underlines a level of crudity which seems to be beyond belief. The only comparable episodes in the present times are perhaps the destruction of precious artifacts during the cultural Revolution in China and the attempt of the Khmer rouge to take Cambodia back to a pre-industrial age by murdering educated people. India has a special reason to be mortified by the outrageous acts of the fanatics because Afghanistan is a region with which India has had close historical ties, as during the Kushan dynasty. One of the most prominent figures of the *Mahabharata*, Gandhari, hailed from there. And Buddha, of course, was India's greatest son.

But even as the 2, 00 year-old historical sites of Bamiyan are destroyed by vandals along with artifacts of similar antiquity kept in the Kabul Museum, it is disquieting to note that other Islamic countries did not respond either speedily or effectively to stop the barbarians. Ignoring the protests and outrage voiced by many countries, the Taliban has announced that demolition of the Buddhist sculptures at Bamiyan and elsewhere in Afghanistan has already begun. The justification for this act of vandalism is the assertion that idols are un-Islamic. However, these sculptures are not idols, as they are not worshipped. But as far as the Taliban leadership is concerned, such reasoned arguments have fallen on deaf ears. Coming as it does in the wake of UN sanctions on the Taliban regime, this outright rejection of humanistic norms and cultural values will inevitably be interpreted as unequivocal defiance of the international community. The Taliban appears to be bent on validating the western thesis about the "clash of civilisations", These statues and sculptures date back to a period before Afghanistan came under Islam. They are part of Afghan heritage, and through these acts of destruction the Taliban leadership presumably wants to wipe out the pre-Islamic history of its own people. This cultural obliteration recalls the Nazi propagandists' decree to burn all books that did not conform to their thought and philosophy. Consequently, the global community would be justified in treating the Taliban as an international security problem

and take a united stand against it before it goes any further.

The Taliban has besmirched the name of Islam. The danger is that such fanaticism can be infectious, if it is not checked at the very start. It should also be borne in mind that the Taliban was not a native Afghan phenomenon; it was grown and nurtured, and continues to be sustained, in the Deeni madrasas of Pakistan. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are the only countries which recognise the Taliban; the current development casts a special responsibility on them. Without their help and support the Taliban cannot sustain itself for long as Iran, the central Asian republics, and all moderate Islamic nations have shown their disapprobation of the iconoclasts in Kabul[4]. The unrighteousness has reached its peaks in Kashmir. There is serious tension and all pervading materialism has invaded the hearts of fundamentalist the equilibrium has been lost and righteousness has waned. The times demand reemergence of Guru Teg Bahadur.

Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, O Bharata (Arjuna}, then I send forth (create incarnate) Myself[5].

Despite the philosophy like of Gita with Hindus, they were enslaved for centuries together. Hindus have generally been self-condemnatory or it is so alleged. In fact it is the trait of the Eastern Religions or Easter philosophy both. We have always looked within, did self examination and improved. The Vedas were simply verses addressed to various Gods for favours as we were troubled by natural forces of there were adhere conditions. Then we found that our approach was insufficient we looked within and came out with Upanishads which are all time philosophical treatises. We became self conscious, as people criticised Upanishads. We produced the systemic philosophy indifferent Darshans. Ultimately imaged the Advaita Vedanta, and unparalleled Absolute Idealism. Battles of Ramayana and Mahabharata were fought for righteousness, to assert that dharma wins ultimately and Alexander set out on winning spree. Genghis Khan thought that Mongolians were supreme race. He conquered kingdom after kingdom.

The Muslims right from the inception of Islam were invaders and looted lots of nations. They rules over us we were then ruled

by the British. We have been like grass being trodden by all, yet keeping roots in soil. The Muslim came, were uprooted by the British. They are also gone. The sun now finds no difficulty setting over their empire. Once it never set over it. Our introspection appears to have overshot. Hinduism is now synonymous with cowardice. Even Mahatma Gandhi once remarked that Hindus were cowards and Muslims goons. We saw the partition of the country in 1947. Though in the long run it also proved harmful to Pakistan who ultimately lost the eastern side into the creation of Bangladesh.

Now Kashmir is bone of contention. Two open wars have been fought Proxy is still waging. Terrorism is escalating day by day. The victims are Hindu, Kashmiri Shaivas or Kashmiri Brahmans. They have been driven out from their hearth and home. They are refugees in their own country.

The questionnaires as to why all Hindus in India cannot unite together in their favour and do something for stopping the terrorism and allowing the Kashmiris go back and re-settle safely and securely. The BJP is puzzled, which used to boast of its Hinduism, yet it is not doing much. But more unfortunate is the role of congress, which had been dubbed a party of Hindus even before Independence. To some extent it is true as well. All the great leaders of Congress draw their inspiration from Hinduism or Hindu scriptures. Gandhi openly claimed that Gita has always guided him in all his personal and political strifes. Tilak wrote a commentary on Gita when he was in prison. Aurobindo who had been a revolutionary earlier became Rishi:

Rajagopalacharya wrote on Gita, Radhakrishnan was perhaps the greatest modern philosopher in Indian tradition.

Yet the tragedy is that congress men fight shy in supporting the Hindus or even calling them so. They may have differences with BJP or its allies on political issues. This a healthy sign in democracy. But they should realise that majority of them are Hindus. They should unite with BJP and its allies in so far so the Kashmiri Hindus are concerned. The Muslims in Congress party or even in other parties are not opposed to this idea.

The first step then would be that all Hindus in all parties should issue statements condemning the atrocities. On Kashmiri Hindus just as women of all parties unite for reservation of seats in Parliament and Vidhan Sabha, there is no difficulty for Hindus in all parties to Unite in favour of Kashmiri pandits. Even the Indian Muslims have been equivocal in condemning atrocities in Kashmir.

So let all Hindus unite, irrespective of party affiliation in condemning atrocities on Kashmiri Hindus. The next step should be educate our Indian Muslim brothers and tell them that the Hindu unity is not against them but the atrocities of ISI of Pakistan which is during out Hindus from Kashmir under the false pretext of liberation. Some of the Indian Muslims should be persuaded to visit Kashmir and counteract the anti Indian propaganda there. The other day the Imam of Jama Masjid said that the plebiscite in Kashmir should include opinion of all Muslims in India. So the fear of congress that their sympathy with Kashmir Hindu world alienate Muslims is ill-founded.

It is time that all Indian Hindus unite together in favour of Kashmiri Hindus and also educate the Indian Muslims accordingly who are more than ready to listen.

Failing to convert Guru Teg Bahadur to Islam, Emperor Aurangzeb had him arrested, tortured and executed in public in Chandni Chowk in Delhi on 11 November 1675. Gurudwara Sis Ganj is a sacred monument to his martyrdom as it stands on the spot where he was beheaded. To this day, his epoch-making Martyrdom Day (Shahidi Gurpurab) draws a throng of the faithful.

The martyrdom was a momentous happening. It broke the stupor of an indolent society. A new spirit of fearlessness arose. It changed the course of history in northern India. It vindicated the ideals of human dignity and freedom set by Guru Nanak. This supreme sacrifice by the head of a young, emerging religion to ensure the right of the followers of another faith practise their religion in freedom is without parallel in the history of mankind[6].

Kashmir Shaivism is still practised by the followers of this system and some great Gurus, such as, late Swami Mukta Nand

of Ganeshpura and his disciples as well as his successors in lineage are staunch followers of this system. Great Gurus whose reference has been made earlier initiate them through 'Shaktipat' an ancient practice adopted. Later, the Shaktipat or the instant awakening of the dormant energy (Kundalini) methods were adopted and practised by Nath and Siddha Saints. Sikh Gurus were also blessed dormant energy, though the term 'kundalini' has relevant to discuss briefly the account of Sikh and other Gurus more particularly Guru Tegh Bahadur, keeping in view the social religious and cultural aspects of the present study.

All talk of fragmenting the country will have been silenced, with a Sweet and the rising tide of disunity, distrust mutual hostility put down, and conditions for a harmonious evolution of One Homogeneous People, One Nation, will have been established. Barring some vociferous elements the mass of the people will stand solidly behind such a scheme.

In spite of inheriting one of the most ancient civilisations of the world, Indians forgot their heritage and India lost its identity because of a number of foreign invasions and resultant slavery for centuries. According to a fable, a lion cub brought up by sheep started bleating and behaving like a sheep and when it was taken to the water and shown its reflection, the lion realised its true nature. India can be likened to the lion cub. India's values of life are derived from Sanatan Dharma that played the role of world teacher once and 50 years after independence, India, remembering its past glory stepped out to find a place under the sun, to transform itself into an invincible power in the world.

Srimacchandanatha introduced the Kula system in Kashmir in the beginning of the 5th century AD. Later, in the 9th century, because its teachings had become distorted, Sumatinatha reintroduced it. In the line of Masters that followed from Sumatinatha, Somanatha was his disciple. Sambhunatha was the disciple of Somanatha, and the great Abhinavagupta was the disciple of Sambhunatha.

As the Krama System is concerned with successive realisation it is primary concerned with space and time because where there

is succession there you will find the existence of space and time. In both the Pratyabhijna System and the Kula System you are beyond space and time. In the Krama System it is in the end, not in its process, that you are beyond time and space because it also carries you to that timeless and spaceless state.

The Krama system is primarily attributed to saktopaya and to the twelve Kalis. The twelve kalis are said to be the twelve movements of any one cognition. For example if you look at any object such as a pot, the sensation travels from your thought to the place of the pot and then returns again from the place of the pot to your thought giving you the sensation whereby you realize this pot. You do not realize this pot at the place of the pot you realize this pot. You do not realize this pot at the place of the pot, you realize this pot in your mind. Your perception has moved from inside to the pot and then returned again from the pot to your thought. And these movements are distributed in twelve ways as the twelve kalis in the Krama System.

The rise of prana kundalini is also described in the Krama System because in prana kundalini you rise from one chakra to another chakra, from one state to another state. As this is a successive process it is found in the Krama System. The fourth system, which comprises the *Trika* philosophy, is called *Spanda* System.

These four systems referred to earlier form the one thought of the Trika system, all accept, and are based on, the same scriptures. These scriptures, which in Shaivism are called agamas, are the ninety two agamas of 'Saivism, the monistic Bhairava Sashtras which are supreme (para) and which are 64 in number, the mono-dualistic Rudra Shastras which are medium (parapara) and which are eighteen in number, and the dualistic Shiva Shastras which are inferior (apara) and which are ten in number.

Monistic meditation is meditation on the Absolute. As the Absolute is beyond form and beyond attributes, this type of meditation is the most difficult of all. It is not thinking of mere formlessness such as 'vacant space', the blue sky or the shoreless ocean. This does not constitute meditation on the Absolute. It is only thinking of the 'material infinity' called mahakasha or the universal space. A higher and subtler form of infinity is the 'mental

infinity' called chittakasha or the space of the mind, from which infinite thought-forms arise, as in the dream state. But the true absolute, the Infinite of monism, is the Spiritual infinity or the Infinity of the Spirit, called chidakasha, the void beyond all forms and attributes. This is the negation of everything conceivable or expressible and is described in the words, 'not this, nor that', of the Upanishads. This is inconceivably higher than the infinity of the universe and the infinity of the mind, for the universe and the mind are both limited, but the infinity of the spirit, the Atman or Brahman, is the true Infinity, the true Absolute of monism.

Monistic meditation is bound to prove difficult even in the case of those who have bound to prove difficult even in the case of those who have arrived at an intellectual conviction of the identity of the Atman or the Self in man with Brahman or the Oversoul. Vedanta, therefore, prescribes four forms of preliminary disciplines for monistic aspirants, without undergoing which monastic seekers cannot successfully attempt their meditation. The first and foremost of these is the constant discrimination between the Real and the unreal. Day and night the aspirant is to think of the enduring real which abides and does not change, and which is, therefore, different from the passing real. He is to discriminate constantly between the Absolute Reality and the relative reality of the universe and its phenomena. Vedanta boldly asserts that not only is the universe with its myriad forms clothed in myriad hues ephemeral, but also the body of man and his mind including his ego. This teaching is based on the experience of the Seers.

Even this discrimination between the Real and the unreal is insufficient to help the seeker in his monistic meditation and help him realize the goal of monism. Man lives in this world, and therefore with a view to protecting his mind from obstacles to the practice of discrimination, three other forms of spiritual disciplines are also enjoined. One of these consists in the practice of the following six virtues:

Checking the mind from the pursuit of all objects except hearing the Upanishads and other teaching of Vedanta;

Checking the organs of action and knowledge from all objects except hearing the Upanishads and other teachings of Vedanta;

Keeping the organs so restrained from drifting along their old course to sense objects;

Remaining unruffled by pleasure and pain, profit and loss, prosperity and adversity, honour and dishonour, and other pairs of opposites;

Remaining unruffled by pleasure and pain, profit and loss, prosperity and adversity, honour and dishonour, and other pairs of opposites;

Constantly concentrating the mind on hearing the Upanishads and other teachings of Vedanta, and practising such virtues as modesty, humility, devotion, purity and service to the guru; and

Faith in God; faith in the Upanishads and other teachings of Vedanta; faith in the guru; and faith in one's capacity to realize the Truth.

Finally, The seeker is exhorted to create in himself a divine discontent and a thirst for liberation from the thraldom of body, mind and ego, as well as from nescience, by attaining Illumination.

These disciplines prepare the mind for steadiness in daily meditation on the Atman, the Pure Consciousness in man, and on his identity with the Oversoul or Transcendental Consciousness.

In order to help its students in monistic meditation, Vedanta gives an unchallenged and unchangeable definition of the absolute Reality by declaring that it is that which remains unaffected throughout all time - past, present and future.

With a view to ascertaining the nature of Reality or what it is, the seers of India first studied objective phenomena. They noted that objects changed with lapse of time. They were once in a subtle state and then their present condition, and from this they will again change into a subtle state. What is true of individual objects is also true of the universe as a whole. The universe also was once in a subtle state from which it evolved into its present condition, and it will again return to its subtle state in the future. Thus what we see is not a permanent reality. But we should remember that though it may change and change, it never ceases to exist; in other words the notion of existence can never be removed from our minds.

Not only objective universe but also the observer who saw it changed from time to time. His body and mind change with years. Nay, more, he is not the same during the 24 hours of the day and night. During day he is awake, but enters into quite a different state when he sleeps and begins to dream, and when he is in dreamless sleep he is in yet another state which is different from his waking and dream states. Not only do the objective phenomena of the universe change, but there is a change also in the subjective counterpart in man.

A study of phenomena as presented to the consciousness of man in the different states of waking, dream and sleep. In the waking state the universe appears as real, tangible, perceptible to the five senses. In the dream state the universe becomes thin and attenuated. And in sleep man does not see anything, does not know anything; the universe has entirely disappeared and he is not even aware that he is sleeping; but when he wakes in the morning, he remembers to have slept well or ill as the case may be. Now every act of remembrance is an act of re-cognition. This means that the cognition took place even in sleep without man's knowledge. The cognizer in sleep is Consciousness itself. It directly registers sleep without the help of mind and ego, for these do not function in sleep - it registers the fact of sleep just as at night the thermometer records the temperature and the barometer the atmospheric pressure, though we are fast asleep.

Consciousness is present in our waking and dream states, but it takes the help of the mind and the ego to perceive and know. Mind and ego are its adjuncts in the waking and dream states. In the waking state we are conscious of ourselves, our pleasures and pains, joys and sorrows. We are conscious of these in the dream state also, though the time, space and causation in the dream state are of a standard different from that of the waking state.

When I am awake, my identity is felt as such and such. In dream I perceive many things which are not seen in the waking state, and the ego of waking has vanished and another ego has taken its place; yet I know that another person does not dream for me; it is I myself who dream and wake up again. In sleep nothing is perceived and there is neither the ego of dream nor that of waking; yet on waking we all feel and know intuitively the

identity of our personality in waking, dream and sleep. Extending the study of consciousness to the period from our birth till old age, we shall find that it was we that were born, it is we that are now living and it is we that will grow old and die.

Pure Consciousness is behind the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep, or rather it has three modes of being, called waking, dream and dreamless sleep. It is also behind all the stages of life such as infancy, youth, middle age and old age. Nay, it has been existing eternally throughout our past lives and will exist throughout the future. It is the Atman or the Self, a fact underlying all that is given by experience. "The pure Consciousness is that of which the personal consciousness, which is bound up with the activities of body and mind and with which alone man is normally acquainted, is a reflection in matter".

Pure Consciousness is separate from mental activity. It is not a mere idea or abstraction but a Reality, indeed the greatest Reality that man can attain. This Pure Consciousness is called Purusha by the Samkhya philosophy and Atman by Vedanta. But for it and its illuminating power, the power to manifest mental and bodily functions, such functions would go on unconsciously and unknown. Unlike matter, it is immutable, beginningless and endless, a steady shadowless light that knows not any change. It is the immaterial part of man; It is his immortal soul, his deathless Self, the core of his being. Shankara says, "the Atman is *jna,* Eternal Consciousness, because it is It is uncreate. Eternal Consciousness is the nature of the Atman just as heat and light are of fire". The moment a seeker will realize it, he will intuitively realize Its identity with the Oversoul, Brahman.

In all the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep the Atman is the witness. But our goal is to be the Atman with nothing to Witness - the Atman as it is, shining in Its own glory undimmed by its adjuncts.

The tearing off of the veil of prakriti with a view to realizing the Atman and Its identity with Brahman has to be attempted first by meditating on the Atman and then on Its identity with Brahman has to be attempted first by meditating on the Atman and then on Its identity with Brahman, until eventually this identity is realized. If this method is found difficult, one should begin by

meditating on god with attributes, and if necessary, on god with form and attributes, and in due course follow the monistic method.

In monism we have a method of meditation which does not want us to accept any theological doctrine or dogma of any particular religion. Its philosophy and its approach are like the air and water, the gift of Mother Nature: they belong to everyone[7].

The sages of the past have all had much to say about idle chatter being the hall-mark of fools. And if we analyse this view, harsh though it may appear at first sight, it will surely be evident that a flow of conversational prattle betokens a mind uncontrolled and with no sense of direction. And an uncontrolled mind having no sense of direction implies an inability to concentrate and inability to concentrate implies no capacity for serious thinking, for grasping a subject, for discernment or for any of the mundane functions of mind governed by reason.

Words do express thoughts; but equally they do not always express thoughts as the logical distinction between a judgment and a proposition shows. But even when the words do express a thought, the question must be asked: are the thoughts worth expressing? Some thoughts certainly are. They can be stimulating and provocative of further thinking, they can be productive of insight in another person, they can elicit an association of ideas. But these thoughts are in the minority and are the product of persons who can only be termed 'thinkers' and who are usually scholar or statistics. If we are honest we have to admit that not only are the majority of our own thoughts not worth expressing but quire a number of them would be better left unexpressed - and that we should be the better for not having ever had them.

As with everything, quality not quantity is the watchword. There a saying that runs: "Better to keep your mouth shut and be thought fool than to open it and remove all doubt on the fact." But how difficult it is to keep our mouths shut. An hour a day of avowed silence might indeed be a god, sent to many people as a discipline, or at least the practice of it would make them realise quickly how spontaneously and mechanically words bubble forth from between-their lips, with no apparent central control directing them. The man who is master of himself would be one

who never spoke except to some purpose, and who said exactly what he wanted to say. How often do we say what, when we have uttered it, we find we had not really wanted to say after all. "I could have bitten my tongue out after I had said that!" is an expression not in frequently heard. The Tongue, apparently, then is the Master of the self, and not the self the Master of its organ and Tongue.

The well-directed mind to which the Tongue is servant, speaks to the point and the words forthcoming are worthy of attention. Further, the well directed mind has no need of circumlocution for, knowing what it wants to say, it can use the words best fitted for expressing itself and circumlocution is the effect of uncertainty of thought and lack of knowledge, both about the subject and the mode of utterance.

A mind that is Enlightened fully would have no need of many words. The word best fitted to the situation would spring from it spontaneously. A mind partially enlightened, and so far above the minds of the masses, would be able to express itself succinctly and simply, but would have a little less command, and so on down the scale, for the lowest evolved mind will have the most to say in the longest, possible way and in the end no one will know what it is talking about.

In Formal Logic distinction is made between the connotation and denotation of a term. The greater the connotation the less the denotation. The word 'table' denotes this or that particular table of a certain sizes, shapes and colours. Hence, denotation circumscribes and connotation expands our concepts.

To a fully Enlightened Being the connotation of a word would be maximal, to his hearers it would be proportional to their ability to "read into it" a meaning. That is why there are different levels of meaning in almost every Teaching that has been given to the world. A single sentence can have many different meanings, each True at its own level and absorbing each other. Because there are therefore different interpretations, it does not follow that any one of them is necessarily false, even if apparently contradictory, merely that the more superficial can be embraced by and enveloped in the deeper. To take a story literally, is the most 'superficial form

of comprehension; to see the meaning of the story and its purpose, to see the Truth behind it, shows a greater power of thought, a more highly evolved power of thought, a more highly evolved mind.

Words are to be used for imparting Truth at a certain level. But they are inadequate to express Absolute Truth, as the Buddha never ceased to make clear to those whose idle curiosity prompted them to question Him about the Final Cause. Absolute Truth cannot be confined by words, for words are the product of finite minds and Absolute Truth is Infinite, so that any statement made concerning the Infinite is less than the Truth.

The absolute truth is absolute reality and is called Shiva, and is regarded as beginningless, uncaused, free from defects, the all-doer and the all-knower, who frees the individual soul from the bonds which fetter them. The formula of satchitananda is interpreted as implying the eight attributes of self-existence, essential purity, intuitive wisdom, infinite intelligence, freedom from all bonds, infinite grace or love, omnipotence, and infinite bliss[8]. By the practice of these Yogas, the mind gets purified and is rendered fit for meditative flights. When such a mind is absorbed in meditation, the last traces of thoughts die away, leaving the meditator in a state of Absolute Bliss.

Shiva, of diverse nature, is atonce pacific and fierce. He personifies the disintegration forces of the cosmos, death and destruction, and the malignant forces of nature. Not only is Shiva auspicious, he is the Great Lord – Maheshvara: the Great God – Mahadeva; Lord of Universe – Jageshvara; the Great God Mahadeva; Lord and, indeed, he has more than a thousand names that define his multiple aspects.

At times Shiva is a benign god who plays an ordinary role of loving husband and doting father intent on the pleasures of family life. Yet he is atonce Natraja, the cosmic dancer, to whose thunderous rhythms the world's tremble. He is also Yogeshvara, he is Demon Lord – Bhuteshvara, or the terrible one. He is Bhairava; gruesome and fearful to behold, a god to be placated with blood and alcohol than adored with flowers and vermilion. Shiva's cognizances – weapons, dress, ornaments, signs, and

gestures are many. Chief among them is his vertically positioned third eye and an erect penis-Urdhvalinga. The former is the organ of destruction from which his terrible wrath blazes forth; the later, a symbol of yogic self-control in which psycho-sexual energy is channelised to spiritual benefit. Other important symbols of Shiva are the trident – trishula, the double-headed drum damru; the ascetics rosary – rudraksamala and water pot – kamandlu-tumbi; and tiger-skin, loin cloth and serpent ornament, a complement that varies in accordance with a given manifestation.

Shiva's vehicle and omnipresent companion is Nandi – the placid bull. His consort is Parvati and her innumerable aspects and names as Shiva" Shakti; and his children are Karttikeya the warrior god; and Ganesh – the elephant headed maker and remover of trouble. Shiva's principal abode is Mt. Kailasha in Himalaya. Situated in Himalaya Pashupatinath is the Nepalese Benaras.

According to belief of the Vaisnavite, the devotee of Vishnu, the God is the source of the universe and of all things, one of the numerous form is Shiva who evolved from the fierce vedic God Rudra. Brahma is demiurge of Vishnu. Brahma creator of the world is born out of the lotus emanating from the navel of Vishnu. Shiva has ferocious and dangerous side to his character but Vishnu is benevolent and works continuously for the welfare of the world. He incarnates himself wholly or partially to achieve this task unlike this, Shiva's character is ambivalent.

Shiva means bright or happy one and auspicious but in practice he visits battlefields, burning grounds and lurks in horrible places, which are very much inauspicious. Shiva has bizarre tastes and wears garland of skulls and is surrounded by demons, ghosts and evil spirits. He is death and time and thus destroyer of everything. Himself a great ascetic, he practised severe penance and became patron of deity of ascetics. As a great yogi he sits on a tiger skin on the high slopes of the Himalayan Mount Kailash and through his deep meditation the world is maintained.

There is a legend, which describes unity of various deities. Once Lakshmi and Durga were sitting together in presence of

Shiva. Lakshmi contended that Vishnu is greater than Shiva because Shiva worshipped him. When they were arguing, Vishnu appeared himself and to prove that he and Shiva were equal, entered Shiva's body and they became one.

As per Skanda Purana, on one occasion, Shiva asked Vishnu to become a beautiful woman as he did to attract the attention of asuras whilst gods drank amrita during churning of the ocean. When Vishnu assumed the form of a beautiful woman, Shiva embraced her overexcited. Vishnu ran away but Shiva followed him when Vishnu resumed his proper form but Shiva clasped him so strongly that their bodies were united half woman, half man. This deity was given the name Harihara (Hari being title of Vishnu and Hara of Shiva). Cult of Harihara developed in middle ages and Harihara temples were patronised by Vijaya Nagara Kings in the south where this god is still worshipped.

The famous "Tandav Nritya", Shivas dance, is nothing but eternal vibratory phenomenon of the physical world. As mentioned in Hindu Shastras, when Shiva performs "Tandav Nritya", the whole universe vibrates in tune.

Shiva is represented in human form in minute details but he is universally worshipped in another form of the Linga. It is intended to represent male and female reproductive organs. According to Padma Purana, Bhrigu, son of Brahma and a sage was entrusted with the task of finding which of the three gods (Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh or Shiva) was the greatest. He came to Shiva's abode but was not allowed to meet him immediately as Shiva was busy with Devi, his wife. Bhrigu waited sometime but became impatient and exhausted. Out of anger he cursed and said that he treated me with contempt in preferring the embraces of Parvati, so his forms of worship shall be Linga and Yoni.

According to Vamana Purana when Sati died at the Daksha's sacrifice, Shiva fell into great distress and wandered from one place to other as a mad person. He visited many hermitages for peace but could not get it and remained in pathetic conditions. Finding Shiva in such state, many of the hermit's wife fell in love with him and out of sympathy and affinity accompanied him from place to place. Observing such a behaviour of their wives, hermits

cursed the god and deprived him of his manhood, followed by great concern. Brahma and Vishnu intervened on Shiva' s behalf Subsequently hermits consented to withdraw their curse on the condition that the offender should be represented by the Linga which became an object of worship by men and gods as Shivalinga.

Shiva is supposed to possess a third eye situated in the middle of his forehead. This is a peculiar eye which when opened, releases enormous energy and destroys things at sight. According to Mahabharata, Shiva was engaged in austerities in the Himalayas when Uma with her companions dressed as ascetic came behind him and playfully put her hands over his eyes. Suddenly darkness prevailed and the world became lifeless and destitute of oblations. The gloom was transient. Bundle of flames emanated from Mahadeva's forehead, in which a third eye having luminosity of the Sun was formed. The heat and the fire out of this eye consumed everything on the mountain. Fearing further damage Uma stood in submission before her husband and then only the Himalaya, her father were restored to their former condition.

Shiva is known as a great god of mystical stillness but he is a great dancer and lord of dance (Natraja). In South India he is worshipped in temples where dance is a great part of celebration. Shiva has invented more than 108 types of dances some calm and gentle, others fierce, terrible and orgiastic. Tandava dance is the most famous of all in which the angry god surrounded by chain of drunken attendants beats out a wild rhythm in which world is destroyed at the end of the cosmic cycle.

Pushpadanta's Mahima Stotra eloquently describes the effects of Shiva's cosmic dance, with the god's matted hair striking terror in the hearts of the wicked and imparting hearts of the wicked and imparting joy to the bhakta. In a well-known form of the cosmic dance, the Pradosha dance, Shiva dances at twilight in Parvati's presence to alleviate the suffering of his devotees.

Our century stands in awe of the immense force exuded by an individual who sought moral and spiritual perfection. By adherence to Satya and Ahimsa, Gandhiji even moved the sun to set on the British Empire. Imagine what humankind could be if it sought perfection at the physical, intellectual, emotional and

spiritual levels. Humankind would obtain ultimate freedom, not only from external colonial powers, but from its inability to heal itself.

That is why Yogic science begins with the body, making it a fit companion for the inner adventure of conquering the breath (pranayama), the senses (pratyahara), the mind, the intellect and the consciousness (dharana, dhyana and samadhi). Learning to meditate (accessing the highest consciousness) before one has accessed the gross body, the subtle mind or even the subtlest breath is like learning to run before one has learnt to walk. "But the Buddha or Swami Vivekananda did not practise asanas to reach self-actualisation", is a common refrain of critics.

The temple itself has been managed by a special class of priests called the dikshitars for many centuries now, as Shiva-Natraja was the family deity of the Cholas and the temple buildings are considered an architectural feat.

The dance of Shiva embodies the primal rhythmic energy, and the secret of Chidambaram is that there is no linga in the sanctum sanctorum; or rather, as tradition says, there is an invisible linga of akasha. The veil is removed only on special occasions, when the puja is performed. Chidambaram is the inner space of the heart; away from the formalisms of religion and ritual in the temple, it is a space where, as the poet says, "tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection".

There are five shivalingas in the Tamil portion five shivalingas in the Tamil portion of South India, within a certain radius, that correspond to the pancha-mahabhutas or the five elements of the universe: earth, water, fire, wind and ether.

The earth or Prithvi-linga is worshipped at Kanchi, the water or Apa-linga at Jambukeshwara, the fire or Tejaslinga at Tiruvannamalai, the wind or Vayu-linga at kalahasti and the ether or Akasha-linga at Chidambaram. The emotions evoked by myth and symbol in the Indian tradition cover the entire spectrum of human existence; and so too at Chidambaram, where the form of Shiva as Natraja, the great dancer, has been the subject of veneration and interpretation through the ages.

Shiva as Natraja stands in a halo or circle of flames. The circle issues from the mouth of a pair of dolphins or makara. The halo symbolises Pranava, the mystic syllable Om. The drum in Shiva's right hand symbolises sound, primal creation. The primordial sounds of the alphabet emerged from Shiva's drum, and formed the basis of grammar or vyakarana.

Legend has it that Shiva danced at Chidambaram to please his two devotees, Vyaghrapada and Patanjali, the latter being credited with the science of grammar. The deer one side symbolises the mind —and just as the deer leaps all around, so too the human mind leaps from one thing to another. The tiger-skin that Shiva wears is the skin of ahamkara, egoism, which he has killed.

The Ganga in Himalayas issuing from Shiva's head is the chittashakti or wisdom, which is cool and refreshing. The moon symbolises the ethereal light and bliss of atman. One foot is planted over the demon Muyalaka, symbolising maya or the delusion that has been torn asunder. The raised right foot signifies renunciation, the fourth state of mental absorption called turiya. The second right hand represents peace, and in one the left hands is held Agni, symbolising the lighting up of the atman. The place of the dance is the Tillai Vanam, the body of the individual self, the heart itself.

Shiva is represented with three eyes, symbols of the Sun, Moon and Fire; of time past, present and future. Shiva wears in his right ear a man's earring called the makarakundala, and in his left a woman's earring called the tatanka, demonstrating his Ardhanarishvara form, combining the masculine and the feminine aspects of the Universe.

Besides the rudrakshas, he wears the upavita, the sacred thread consisting of 96 tattvas or categories. Shiva's serpent represents the cosmic force in Yogic parlance. The mystical significance of the dance of Shiva is poetically summed up by Ananda Coomaraswamy when he describes this awesome form of Shiva-Nataraja as the synthesis of religion, science and art, "with an appeal universal to the philosopher, lover and artist".

Coomaraswamy goes on to view the dance as a metaphor for the five-fold activities of srishti or creation, sthiti or preservation,

samhara or destruction, tirobhava or veiling and finally, anugraha or blessing.

Shiva the third person of the Hindu Triad is god of destruction. In Vedas he was a subordinate deity but in the Purana, he has thrown Agni, Sunrya, Mitra, Vayu and Varuna completely into the shade. Indra was the most important deity in the Vedas but in Purana he came down to occupy subordinate position and became unable to compete in power with Rudra (Shiva) and Vishnu. In Hinduism, death of any creature is converted immediately into some other life form. Therefore Shiva's destruction is followed by immediate creation, hence the name Shiva-the happy one. This may be one of the reasons for his worship in the form of Linga the sign of procreation.

Shiva is know by other names such as: Mirtunjaya – He who conquers death; Gangadhara – Holding the ganges in hair; Girisha – Lord of hills; Digambara – The naked; Bhagvat – The Lord; Bhuteswara – Lord of Goblins; Chandrasekhara – Crescent bearer; Maheswara – The great God; Mahakala – The great time.

Shiva resides in the mount Kailash with Parvati. His vahan, carrier is Nandi, the bull. He wears the Brahminical thread of white snake, necklace of beads, garland of skulls, cloth of elephant hide; has matted hair and body rubbed with ashes. He rides the bull Nandi, accompanied by Ghosts, Goblins, Spectres, Witches, Imps, Spirits and evil spirits; has moon on his forehead, Ganges on his head with red eyes possessing a trident.

Shiva is the destroyer and is declared as the Rudra of the Vedas. Rudra is supposed to be born of Agni, living as a householder and the Usha, the dawn as his wife. The fire always produces unpleasant sound therefore Rudra was supposed to weep (rud means to weep) and hence the name Rudra.

In the Vedas also, the form of Shiva is mentioned as a terrible god, associated with spirit. Since he is a destroyer and as per Hindu Mythology, death is not death in the sense of passing into non-existence but, simply a change into a new form of life, so the destroyer is really a recreator[9].

The Vedic poets as divided into the three domains of earth, air or atmosphere, and heaven regard the Universe, the stage on

which the actions of the gods are enacted. The sky when regarded as the whole space above the earth forms with the latter the entire universe consisting of the upper and the ether world.

Terror and gloom are conspicuously absent from the feelings aroused in Indian mind by its religion, art or literature. In the religion they are rarely awakened and only in order to be immediately healed and, even when they come, are always sustained by the sense of a supporting and helping presence, an eternal greatness and calm or love or Delight behind; the very goddess of destruction is at the same time the compassionate and loving Mother; the austere Maheshwara, Rudra, is also Shiva, the Auspicious, Ashutosha, the refuge of men.

The Indian thinking and religious mind looks with calm, without shrinking or repulsion, with an understanding born of its age long effort at identity and oneness, at all that meets it in the stupendous spectacle of the cosmos. And even its asceticism, its turning from the world, which begins not in terror and gloom, but in a sense of vanity and fatigue, or of something higher, truer, happier Than life, soon passes beyond any element of pessimistic sadness into the rapture of the eternal peace and bliss. Indian secular poetry and drama is throughout rich, vital and joyous and there is more tragedy, terror, sorrow and gloom packed into any few pages of European work than we can find in the whole mass of Indian literature. It does not seem to me that Indian art is at all different in this respect from the religion and literature.

The western mind is here thrusting in its own habitual reactions upon things in the indigenous conception in which they have no proper place. Mark the curious misreading of the dance of Shiva as a dance of Death or Destruction, whereas, as anybody ought to be able to see who looks upon the Natraja, it expresses on the contrary the rapture of the cosmic dance with the profundities behind of the unmoved eternal and infinite.

Take the great Buddhas – not the Gandharan, but the divine figures or groups in cave-cathedral or temple, the best of the later southern bronzes of which there is a remarkable collection of plates in Mr. Gangoly's book on that subject, the Kalasanhara image, the Natararajas. No greater or finer work, whether in conception or execution, has been done by the human hand and

its greatness is increased by obeying a spiritualised aesthetic vision. The figure of the Buddha achieves the expression of the infinite in a finite image, and that is surely no mean or barbaric achievement, to embody the illimitable calm of Nirvana in a human form and visage.

The Kalasanhara Shiva is supreme not only by the majesty, power calmly forceful control, dignity and kingship of existence which the whole spirit and pose of the figure visibly incarnates, - that is only half or less than half its achievement, - but much more by the concentrated divine passion of the spiritual overcoming of time and existence which the artist has succeeded in putting into eye and brow and mouth and every feature and has subtly supported by the contained suggestion, not emotional, but spiritual, of every part of the body of the godhead and the rhythm of the significance, the rapturous intensity and abandon of the movement itself and yet the just restraint in the intensity of motion, the subtle variation of each element of the single theme in the seizing idea of these master sculptors[10]?

Shiva is the God of the perpetual dance of creation. Shiva devours. Transforms, re-creates; is the eternal symbol of the fluidity of the world. Shiva is the god of becoming, the god of catharsis. Of cleansing, of purifying; of making new things out of the dust of destruction. Shiva is a central symbol of re-birth, re-awakening, healing and re-emergence.

Shiva awoken to our dilemmas is the ecological Shiva. The eternal dance of Shiva now becomes the dance of healing – of the planet and of ourselves, becomes the dance of purifying our rivers, our mountains and our bodies, becomes the dance of purging our atmosphere of pollutants and our minds of mental pollution, becomes a wholesale reconstruction of our fatigued and decaying culture by infusing it with a new creative substance and energy.

The symbol of the Dancing Shiva is a great metaphor for the dance, which we are about to enter; or rather, in which we have been engaged during the last two decades. We do not take away any of the older attributes of Shiva. We salute him as the

same God of creation and transformation. However, we are now supremely aware that a new dance of Shiva is one of the ecological catharsis, of the healing of Mother Earth, of infusing our perception with reverence for all living beings, of increasing our understanding and sensitivity for the wholeness of creation, for conceitedness and interdependence of all things.

Shiva is not going to dance alone. Rather it is going to lead whole of the universe to a new dance. God or gods cannot do anything for us if we do not help them. God can lead and inspire us. The work has to be done by us. This is the secret of creative life.

Out of tolerance and flexibility in Hindu thinking, Vaisnavism and Shaivism combined together formed a holy Trinity. The Trimurty, the triple form in which Brahma is the creator, Vishnu is the preserver and Shiva is the destroyer. This concept is still the guidelines of all the Hindus in modern India where fusion of religious thinking is taking place to avoid the fragmentation of the society. Unfortunately the whole philosophy more particularly "Kashmir Shaivism" is under siege. Tackling the core issue to the Kashmir problem can lift the siege. The Kashmir issue has cropped up because of the unethical and undesirable partition of India. The partition was mainly the result of lack of faith between the twc major communities. To solve the problem, the first priority should be to cement bonds of love and understanding between the two countries.

Towards this end there should be a no-war pact; cease-fire; cessation of border intrusion; and opening of the border for free trade and travel. The option is between the present ruinous war situation and a sagacious peace plan. Fortunately in India we have leadership who can lead the peace process. The choice lies with the Pakistan, its leadership and the Muslims of the both the countries.

It may always be kept in mind that Bharat is naturally one and indivisible. Pakistan is an artificial, uncalled-for creation whose earlier end would be the fulfilment of a Divine destiny. The people of Pakistan too would welcome it. Today they live under totalitarian regime. Tcmorrow they would be able to live as free citizens in

a democracy, enjoying all rights. There they live steeped in ignorance, wallowing in a mire of mutual ill-will and hate. Here they would have the opportunity of building themselves up as happy honourable citizens.

After all, we have so many Muslims in our country already. No one has borne them ill-will or wanted them to be driven out. No one can ever think in such terms. That would be against Hindu tradition. So let these people from Pakistan also join us, and live in happiness. The only condition is that they be loyal to this motherland and deem it their sacred duty to defend every inch of its territory, if need be, with their lives. There is no other condition. No one wants them to change their mode of worship and renounce Islam. A Hindu cannot make such a stipulation.

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Appendix

The Siege

Preface

Not only the emphasis is to multiply the Muslim Population but also to play diplomacy to divide Hindus. On one occasion, Ibrahim Suleman Sait, MP, Muslim League openly stated:

"Who says Hindus are in majority in India? In fact, Muslims are in majority in India. Sikhs are not Hindus. Jains are not Hindus. Buddhists and neo-Buddhists are not Hindus. Harijans are not Hindus. Hindus do not embrace in their fold these communities. On the contrary, they torture them. That is why they refuse to call themselves Hindus. If Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, neo-Buddhists and Harijans, who are the victims of the repeated atrocities of Hindus, are excluded from the population of Hindus, then Hindus will be a minority in India. Hence, Muslims should be considered as the majority community in India".

More or less on the same waive length speaks Vasant Sathe[1], in an article "Born in a caste", when he writes:

The word 'Hindu', according to Vivekananda, is the Persian pronunciation of the word 'Sindhu' - 'S' getting pronounced as 'H'. The Greeks pronounced 'Sindhu' as Indus. Thus, the land surrounding 'Sindhu' river where the invaders came first was called India from Indus and Hindustan from Hindu. In this definition, the real Hindustan, that is the land surrounding the river Hindu (Sindhu), is where we have today's Pakistan.

The confusion is confounded when we realise that the birth-based professional and vocational caste system has become so rigid over thousands of years, that it is impossible to find the 'Hindu' without a birth-based caste. So water-tight are these castes

that even after conversion to religions. Like Islam, Christianity, Sikhism and Buddhism, the castes have continued to prevail. Because of this caste rigidity, all conversions have been only a one - way traffic. It is impossible for a person to become a Hindu by conversion. He has to be born in a caste or he has to be absorbed in a caste, which is next to impossible.

History is a witness to the fact that most of the converts to Islam, Christianity and recently Buddhism, have been from the Hindu castes and mostly from the lower castes who are eternal victims of inhuman treatment and humiliation in the top-heavy and dogmatic Hindu caste system. There is no such entity as the 'Hindu majority'.

Ibrahim Suleman Sait and Vasant Sathe and the like or knowledgeable persons but knowledge should not be used for destructive purposes. It is to be used for understanding the ultimate truth. Unfortunately, those who possessed considerable knowledge use it to subdue and intimidate others.

ROLLING BACK JEHAD

The gruesome killings of Hindus near the holy Amarnath cave and in Kishtwar Tehsil of Doda District, during July 2001, deserves condemnation (Gun-totting terrorists swooped on two remote hamlets of Kishtwar and gunned down 20 civilians, including four women in a display of crass barbarianism. The carnage, coming close on the heels of the massacre at Sheshnag, which claimed 13 lives including six Amarnath pilgrims).

Pakistani commendation for such mean acts of brutality as patriotic actions of freedom fighters is most despicable. By glorifying such inhuman murders, Pakistan has exposed its uncivilized and barbaric character fit to the denounced by everyone who has the slightest regard for human values.

All these terrorist activities are not aimed at any good of the people of J&K State but for the completion of an unfinished agenda of partition. A certain section of the local population may be rendering a helping hand in such unholy activities.

"It appears that Pakistan and the terrorist outfits aided and abetted by her are encouraged by their success in driving out the

entire Hindu population from the valley. It is time that everyone, belonging to any party or ideology makes it unequivocally clear to our neighbours and her minions in our country that no further division of our country will be tolerated; that 2001 is not 1947. Any price howsoever great and any sacrifice howsoever excruciating to preserve the unity and integrity of our beloved country, shall be our choice".

–Mohan Bhagwat

The Government, both at the Centre and in the State must put down the insurgent terrorism with a heavy hand. So long as Pakistan does not withdraw its support to nefarious secessionist activities in our country the Government need not engage itself in any dialogue with that rogue country. No concession, no goodwill gesture will satisfy Pakistan's appetite for grabbing Kashmir. It pains utmost to see the Government unable to protect the life of its citizens from murderous attacks of a handful of terrorists.

All people need to rise to the occasion and reiterate the commitment to the unanimous resolution of our sovereign Parliament passed in 1994 that historically, legally and constitutionally the whole of J&K State, including the part under the illegal Pak occupation, is an integral part of our country[2].

The UN Security Council Resolutions of 13 April and 13 August 1948 and 5 January and 28 April of 1949 asked Pakistan to vacate the areas it had occupied by force as a pre-condition for a plebiscite. That condition was never fulfilled.

Writing on wall

The Taliban in Afghanistan are largely the creation of Pakistan. Mulla Omar Afghanistan's religious head and supreme ruler, ensures that Islamic law governed every aspect of life. Afghanistan has been identified as the breeding ground for global terrorism and it also produces two thirds of all the drugs, which reach the West in the form of heroin, and various other destinations. Both Iran and Russia, not to speak of other neighbours like Uzbekistan, Kirgizstan, Tajjikistan and even Khazakstan, are all extremely worried over Taliban infiltration of armed militants in their countries. The Shanghai initiative, which was set in motion

at the instance of President Jiang Zemin of China, was taken up further at a high level meeting at Kirgizstan last year. There is now anti-terrorist bureau in all the Central Asian countries and India is also an active member of this setup.

Bin Laden himself reportedly appears on the tape calling on his followers to strike against Western and Jewish interests worldwide.

Taliban's origin : Deoband 1867

The ruling Taliban in Afghanistan is unique in the sense that it is not the product of a national movement like its predecessor, the Mujahiddin, which waged a war against the Soviet Union and its Afghan puppets.

The Taliban is a force created by the Pakistanis with the twin purposes of containing Iran and diluting, and eventually weakening, Russian influence in its former Muslim-majority republic. The implicit aim is to preserve Pakistan's influence over Afghanistan as the Taliban is dependent on Pakistan for logistics and military training and on the UAE for funds.

The Taliban's ideological underpinning can be traced to the dusty country town of Deoband in central Uttar Pradesh where a seminary was set up by Muhammed Quasim Nanotavi in 1867 to counter the British educational model. The purpose was to train religious clerics in Islam, purged of its many practices that have crept in due to deviant cross-cultural influences. Its biases against the Shias came in use the Taliban against Shia-dominated Iran.

The Deobandis are also opposed to the second, and more dominant, Bareilly School, which has adherents in large numbers in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Deoband school would like to reverse the trends that set in during the post Prophet period, which saw the spread through conquest and missionary work. As Islam spread to other countries in different continents, it also adopted some of the practices in different nations and cultures such as Ziarat (praying at the Dargahs of holy men).

According to the Taliban's version of the Deobandi School of jurisprudence, the adoption of local practices led to dilution

of the laws laid down by the Prophet. It considers all 'Umma' (community) to be one and therefore a Muslim in Pakistan or Afghanistan is no different from a Muslim in India. That is where the transborder feeling develops. It also accepts that a true Muslim should establish the rule of Allah in Muslim majority areas and defend the community (Umma) where it is in a minority. The Taliban also subscribes to the waging of a holy war to establish pristine Islam.

The Taliban subscribes to a sect of Deoband School, which broke away after Kamal Ataturk propounded the concept of secular Islam by abolishing the Friday namaz in Turkey. Called the Jamiate- Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), it feels the incorporation of local traditions and national identity is dangerous because it dilutes Islam.

After partition, the Indian wing called Jamiat-ul- Ulema-e-Hind while the theology of pan-Islamisation was propagated by the JUI at a low ebb in Pakistan. In the current hijack crisis, it has been solidly on the side of the Indian Government. In a statement, it has described the keeping of hostages as an anti-Islamic act and said the hijacking has nothing to do with jehad or the Islamic concept of justice.

The breakaway sect had its moment during the days of Benazir Bhutto Government in 1993 when she used it to politically counter the stranglehold of the Jamiat-e-Islami (JEI) which had aligned with her rival, Mr. Nawaz Sharif. The JEI got a fresh lease of life especially in Pakistan's Pushtun-dominated areas bordering Afghanistan. The Pakistan Government not only ousted the Jamiat-e-Islami and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's men from the madarsas but also roped in the Frontier Rifles, then led by Nasrullah Babar, to provide training to these students.

The JEI mullahs exhorted their Taliban (students) to cleanse Islam from cross-cultural influences by waging war against all those trying to dilute Islam. Since the Durrand line separating Pakistan and Afghanistan is an artificial divide among the Pushtun ethnic community, the JEI began running madarasas in parts of Afghanistan as well. The Taliban was told its task was not just to cleanse Islam of cross-cultural influences and establish the rule of

Allah but also to wage war against Russia and India, specially the former for attempting to extend influence in bordering Tajakistan and Uzbekistan and its support to warlords in the non-Pushtun northern Afghanistan who have consistently opposed the Taliban.

The Taliban's efforts received a shot in the arm due to their ideological affinity with another radical sect, the Wahabis, the dominant sect in Saudi Arabia. While there are many differences between the Wahabis (Ahle-Hadiz) and the JUI's version of the Deobandi school of jurisprudence, they are both averse to praying at Dargahs and to observing Muharram. Due to this, affinity funds began pouring in from the Gulf country, which helped it consolidate the opportunity provided by Ms. Benazir Bhutto to tutor and feed the huge Afghan refugee population in Pakistan.

Recently, however, the Taliban's proximity with the UAE has waned due to the presence of Osama Bin Laden in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. However, the Taliban has got over the resource problem due to its stranglehold over the Kandhar-based "truck Mafia" which transports opium from the Golden Crescent. Kandahar is also useful for receiving logistical support from the ISI, which has a base in the nearby Pakistani city of Quetta.

Kargil: Essentially A Taliban Enterprise

President Zia-ul-Haq created the Taliban with American Assistance and encouragement to drive out the soviets from Afghanistan. It was the product of Madras as Islamic fundamentalism), wholly devoted to teaching fundamentals of Islam. It draw poor students from different parts of Pakistan and other Muslim countries. Having accomplished their task in Afghanistan, they have now turned their attention to India. Even though Islamic fundamentalist parties do not win many seats in elections, even then their influence on governmental policy is responsible and a growing number of soldiers and officers of the defence services subscribe, help and aid to Taliban beliefs and activities.

There is ample proof that the Kargil misadventure was essentially a Taliban enterprise, though it was connived at by the Pakistan government and received active assistance from the Army. The dead & the captured included, besides Pakistan

soldiers, foreigners drawn from different Muslim countries. Though India has more Muslim population than that of Pakistan, but Talibans look upon India as an enemy country against which Jehad - the holy war, is a legitimate enterprise.

Pakistan government is unable to contain them and would happily allow them to be eliminated by the Indians. Till the Taliban is extinguished as a force from Muslim countries and the countries having Muslim pockets of influence, India should be prepared to face Taliban onslaught. One battle of Kargil has been won, but we have to keep our power dry for many more Kargil to come.

It may be re-called that at the Six-Plus-Two meeting on Afghanistan held at Tashkent, in 1998, the major concern was the role of the Taliban Regime in Kabul. And, of course, each nation has its own agenda which drives them "to do business" with the same Taliban. Seven officers of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) were in Skardu in Pakistan occupied Kashmir in early part of Kargil operations, monitoring the landing of thirty to forty sorties of supplies flown in daily to bolster Pakistan's effort.

Nawaz Sharif made Pakistan an openly condemned nuclear power in a militarised country. His real political trouble began on October 12, 1999, when he sacked his once hand-picked General, Pervez Musharraf, while he (Musharraf) was on a regular visit to Sri Lanka. Pervez Musharraf inspired the powerful military to go all out against Nawaz Sharif, who was deposed. The bloodless coup cannot be described as a baser thing than Nawaz Sharif's fake democracy. India remembers him as a co-author of the Kargil intrusion. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's trust in him was reciprocated with a stab in the back. Besides Kargil, there was the suicidal fuelling of insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir and an unimaginable rise of attacks on Indian defence posts from across the Line of Control. When we blame Pervez Musharraf, we also remember Nawaz Sharif with equal disdain. US President Clinton, during his stopover on March 26, 2000, in Islamabad, might have saved the life of Nawaz Sharif, but he did not do anything for democracy.

It is amazing how the USA came to create such a monster.

Today these fundamentalists, earlier trained and equipped by the USA and now patronised by Pakistan, are to be found all over the world from Algeria to the Philippines- and there is no international effort to combat them. Kargil has shown to Washington and the world what these fundamentalists can do. They are dedicated killers inspired by the ideology of jehad (holy war). And one day they might even get hold of the nuclear bomb. God forbid.

Ironically, Washington had a major hand in creating the "mujahideen". They were needed to fight the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan. And unlimited resources were poured into Pakistan to train and equip tens of thousands of the so-called "mujahideen".

Washington finds itself helpless today to tackle the problem of fundamentalism-cum-terrorism. It is even powerless to deal with Osama bin Laden. It is a fact that America has created monsters all over the world. But the Taliban is perhaps the most killing monstrous creation. It stands for the antithesis of democracy. Today Washington frowns on the policies of the Taliban.

General Musharraf has unequivocally declared that he will discuss with India only the Kashmir "dispute or issue" and nothing else. And that Jehad is not terrorism and the jehadis will continue to extend its "moral and political support".

Musharraf may be a hardliner, but he's also an insecure person, constantly having to look over his shoulder to ascertain what his corps commanders, death-or-glory Jehadi types, and what passes for public opinion in Pakistan have to say about his performance. The vision of setting up purified religious enclaves is growing unfashionable in the modern world. Musharraf's "freedom fighters" showed their colours soon after their champion left Agra, through vicious communally motivated massacres of civilians at Sheshanag and in Doda district.

Musharraf needs to keep one foot in the pan-Islamic boat, to ensure a cheap supply of Jehadis to throw at India. That makes Pakistan befriend the frankly mediaeval Taliban ostracised by the

rest of the world because of the contempt that it flaunts for civilised values. The US does not care so much about Kashmir, but it cares when its efforts to capture Osama bin Laden are frustrated by the Pakistanis.

One thing Musharraf's military mind has not yet grasped is that he cannot use Jehad as a precision tool against India, while avoiding the social fallout in his own backyard. Jehadis will fight not only India, but among themselves, and soon begin to apply their standards to the rest of Pakistani civil society.

Military dictators have no sense of history and General Musharraf is no exception. "What Musharraf or anyone after him will not be able to handle is the rolling back of Jehad after the Kashmir dispute is solved and restoring the writ of the state. Jehadis sit on top of Pakistan's beleaguered civil society and they will not be disarmed". India would have to deal with a Talibanised Pakistan in the foreseeable future. But New Delhi need not despair since the whole civilised world would be against the Taliban spectre, both in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The activities of Saudi financier Osama bin Laden no doubt raised US concerns about terrorism being directed from the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, especially after the bombing of its embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam. Even after the missile attacks on Bin Laden's headquarters–in which a number of Pakistanis undergoing terrorist training were killed- and after four more US citizens were killed in Karachi following the death sentence given to the Langley CIA killer, Mir Aimal Kansi, the Clinton administration still looked away from the terrorist activities of Pakistan.

Far from yielding economic promise, it is Islamic fundamentalism that has reared its head in the form of Osama bin Laden, who places United States as Islam's worst enemy and countries such as India come only next in his "jehadi" plans. General Musharraf, a mentor of the Jehadi hordes at one time, now wants them to wind down and save Pakistan from being labelled a terrorist and a failed bankrupt state. It is a healthy trend. The success of the summit to be held at Agra during July 2001 is important. As of now, general Musharraf seems to enjoy the

support of a majority of corps commanders in the Pakistan army. There are, however, some disturbing signs that all is not well and he may be facing opposition from some of the 'mullah' generals. A creditable performance from the general at the forthcoming summit might be crucial if he is to sideline and retire the hard-liners and ensure that the Pakistan army does not get Talibanised.

The biggest reason why the USA and the West are abandoning Pakistan as an ally, however, is its economic performance, the core sector that drives modern nations and states forward or into oblivion. It is the process of near insolvency that is the staggering factor gripping Pakistan, which none of its friends can ignore. And at the centre of this process is the military hierarchy and its operations. With over 75 to 80 percent of the Pakistan cake being eaten up by this unproductive expenditure plus debt and interest repayment, there is nothing left in its kitty to build or create.

What is worse, this process appears irreversible – unless there is a scaling down of military expenditure. Which means giving up India – bashing and restructuring India-Pakistan relations on a healthy basis. This is what the Lahore process was all about. And sculpting the Lahore process via the Kargil misadventure has been perhaps the unkindest cut inflicted by Pakistan's rulers on Pakistan and on the prospects of reconstructing India- Pakistan relations as close neighbours, with the Kashmir issue finding its due place in the new scheme of things.

According to Ambassador Cox , the US belief is that the roots of terrorism are to be found in various kinds of ethnic, geographic and other conflicts. Taking a great leap forward from that formulation, he said that was what gave the highest priority to finding resolution to the Kashmir conflict. He did not, however, indicate the need to go to the roots of the murderous animosity that diverse groups around the world feel toward the USA.

The fact is that where other nations are concerned, America will preach sermons about democracy and human rights. But when its own interests are affected, the USA will display unflagging resolve to capture an Aimal Kansi, or tighten the screws on the Taliban to force them to hand over Osama Bin Laden. But they

will never make similar demands on the Taliban or Islamabad to hand over the hijackers of the Indian Airlines plane.

Meanwhile, the hijacking starkly highlights the total inability of the Vajpayee government to safeguard the nation's interests. Home Minister L.K. Advani recently had his own security details augmented. Does he believe that would raise the safety of the nation? Even a senior functionary of the RSS, the ideological wing of the BJP, has charged the government with cowardice for acceding to the hijackers' demands.

The hapless passengers on the Indian Airlines plane were forced to remain blind-folded for hours together. But who put the political blind-fold on External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh so tightly that he could not realise the folly of singing paeans of praise for the Taliban? Since negotiators had already wrapped up the hostage deal, where was the need for the Minister to fly to Kandahar in the company of three convicts sprung from jail? All that he achieved was a brief moment of media glory, followed by days of sustained criticism from all and sundry.

And why such effusive praise for the Taliban? They were hardly tough on the hijackers, who were never more relaxed than in Kandahar. If the Taliban really wanted to convince a doubting world that they were responsible and accountable, they would have arrested the hijackers the moment they came down from the aircraft and put them on trial. That could have been their entry pass to the comity of nations. They will discover that passing praise from Jaswant Singh will cut no ice in Washington and other capitals[3].

The Delhi police or June 16, 2001 claimed to have foiled the attempt of international terrorist Osama bin Laden to blow up the US Embassy at Delhi with the arrest of three persons, including a Sudanese national.

Abdul Rauf Hawas, the Sudanese national, was arrested from Nizamuddin. His interrogation led to the arrest of his accomplice, Shamim Sarvar, a resident of Bihar and a postgraduate in Urdu and Persian from Patna University. Three members of the Bin Laden group are still absconding, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell), Mr. Ashok Chand, said :

The third person, Abbas, was arrested from Udaipur during a raid. Raids on different places are on to make further arrests.

A joint team of the special cell, South Delhi police and central intelligence agencies arrested the suspects. With these arrests, Bin Laden's direct involvement in subversive activities in the country has been confirmed. The security cordon around the US Embassy has been tightened.

Osama bin Laden, a Saudi national, has his network in different countries. He has his base in Afghanistan. He has a very good network in Sudan. The police seized a pre-fabricated improvised explosive device, capable of causing huge destruction, from the possession of the Sudanese national. Six kg of RDX, a cellphone, a timer device and batteries were seized from Shamim's possession. The consignment was given to Shamim by a conduit of Osama bin Laden on the Indo-Nepal border near Raxaul in Bihar.

The DCP said Hawas came to India in 1990 on a student visa and became Indian. He came in contact with Bin Laden's activists in India after two or three years of his arrival in India. In the beginning, he was directed to set up a base in Udaipur where he was studying.

Later, he was asked to shift his base from Udaipur to Delhi where he came in contact with a conduit of Bin Laden. He met Shamim in Delhi in 1998 and motivated him to join the jehad of Bin Laden. Shamim had a number of religious disciples in Delhi and other parts of the Country.

The DCP said Hawas and Bin Laden's conduit called Shamim from Bihar and directed them to execute the orders given by their boss in Afghanistan for which Shamim was paid Rs. 50,000.

Hawas is believed to have travelled to Afghanistan where Bin Laden has his headquarters, and Iran. During interrogation Hawas disclosed that in February 2001 he and the conduit discussed with Shamim the method to spread Bin Laden's Jehad in India. They were then joined by the fourth person, Abdul Rehman Al-Safari, a suspected member of the Bin Laden group who reportedly told them to plan a strike at the US Embassy in New Delhi.

Shamim visited the embassy on the pretext of applying for a visa. During his visits he took detailed note of the security arrangement at the embassy located in Chanakyapuri. After studying it from different angles, they decided to fit a pre-fabricated improvised explosive device in a car and park it close to the visa section of the embassy, the most vulnerable point in the high - security building.

Hawas and Shamim were given Rs. 5 lakh to arrange two drivers and a car to be used in the operation. They decided that there would be a woman along with the driver and they would come back after parking the car at a suitable point. The decision to take a woman along the driver was taken to avoid suspicion. The accused were assured by Bin Laden that after the attack, they would be shifted to some other country.

The Police have arrested a third person in connection with a plot to blow up the US embassy in New Delhi allegedly hatched by Saudi billionaire Osama bin Laden, a senior officer said on June 17, 2001. Abbas was arrested from Udaipur yesterday, after two other suspects - Abdel Raouf Hawas from Sudan and Shamim Sarvar - were questioned.

Hawas and Sarvar were arrested in Delhi on Friday with kg RDX in their possession. "Abbas was given the responsibility for procuring a vehicle" for loading the explosives.

"He was also given the task of erasing the car's engine and chasis numbers so that it would have been difficult to identify the vehicle used" to execute a car bomb explosion, the officer said.

Abbas would be brought to Delhi for questioning, he said, adding more arrests were imminent. "These are just the initial stages. There are certain other people we are looking for and as we get the information we will be making more arrests". The plot to blow up the US embassy came to light on Friday with the arrest of Hawas and Sarvar.

According to the police, Hawas was living in Udaipur for the past eight years under a student visa. He moved to New Delhi five months ago to set up a base and was under surveillance for

three months. During interrogation, Hawas revealed he had been recruited into alleged terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden's group by a Yemeni national, identified as Abdul Rehman al Safani, police said.

Pakistani diplomacy has tried a great deal in recent years to hide the fact that Islamabad sends down trained terrorist mercenaries, into Jammu and Kashmir to wreak violence. But the world is not impressed and is indeed keeping a watch. Evidence of this is the just published book on Pakistan by a former senior American diplomat, Dennis Kux, who drew the admiration of pundits with his authoritative work on the history India US relations, aptly titled "Estranged Democracies".

Mr. Kux informs that Pakistan came within a whisker of being labelled a State sponsor of terrorism by the US during the administration of George Bush Sr. Father of the present president, but escaped by giving assurances, which it promptly broke. Such an appellation would have placed it in the same bracket as countries like Libya, denied it American economic and military assistance and earned it considerable international opprobrium. Islamabad got out of the jam by shifting the Kashmir-oriented terrorist outfits to Afghanistan, and changing the chief of ISI, which manages the Jehadi mercenaries. For good measure it also 'privatized' the terror networks, with the ISI now keeping itself safely in the background, no doubt to be able to deny any links with 'non-State actors' of violence. But Islamabad made sure that it did not dismantle the apparatus of Jehad.

Secularism

If it is (Nidharmi), it, will be a lawless state, and where there is lawlessness, where is no question of the existence of any state? In other words, the concept of (Dharam-nirpekshata) attitude of indifference towards (Dharma) and state are self-contradictory. State can only be a Dharmaraiya rule of Dharma, and nothing else. In Indira's case[4]. Chandrachud, J., explained the basic feature of secularism to mean that-The State shall have no religion of its own and all persons shall be equally practise and propagate religion.

The preamble to the constitution is not a mere flourish of words but was an ideal sec-up for practice and observance as a matter of law through constitutional mechanism[5].

The trinity of the goals of the constitution, viz., socialism, secularism and democracy cannot be realised unless all sections of the society participate in the State power equally, irrespective of their caste, community, race, religion and sex and all discriminations in the sharing of the State power made on those grounds are eliminated by positive measures. Inequality ill favour fraternity, and unity remains a dream without fraternity. The goal enumerated in the preamble of the Constitution, of fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation must, therefore, remain unattainable so long as the equality of opportunity is not ensured to all. Likewise, the social and political justice pledged by the preamble of the Constitution to be secured to all citizens, will remain a myth unless first economic justice is guaranteed to all. The liberty of thought and expression also will remain on paper in the face of economic deprivations[6].

Islam, an Arabic word meaning "peace and social well-being" in this world and the well being in the "Hereafter", is a multidimensional human endeavour and consciously pious living. The pious living i.e., the morality is the aggregate of regulation; standards of community life; of behavior of men; defining their duties to one another and to society; and their devotion to their creator.

Islam was born "in the broad daylight of history" in the early part of the seventh century of Christen era, Islam or the "religion of desert" spread rapidly in the world. The prophet had to wage a life-long, war for protection of his followers and spread of his teachings. In 630, he was able to capture Mecca with the help of a large army, but he left it after a fore night. In the spring of 632 A.D. Mohammed went on a solemn pilgrimage to Mecca. After his return, he became unwell and died.

The teachings of prophet Mohammed are to be found in the Holy Quran. The Prophet Mohammed, emphasised the unity of God. He asked his followers to have faith in angels who brought massage from God[7].

After the death of Prophet in 632 A.D. the task of spread of Islam was taken over by the Omayyid Khalifas. During the regime of first four Khalifas viz., Abu Bokr, Omer, Oman ad Ali; Islam spread into various parts of the world. Within a hundred years of the death of the prophet, the Muslims over threw two mighty Empires, viz., Sassanid Empire and Byzantine Empire. They overcome the whole of Syria, Iran and Mesopotamia[8].

To quote Gibbon, "At the close of the first century of the Hijrat, the Khalifas were the most potent and absolute monarchs of the Globe". The Muslims Empire became so vast that the Khalifas had to shift their head quarters from Madina to Damascus.

Islam claims a book the Quran, which is regarded as a literal transcript of the word of God revealed to Prophet Mohammed-"the last in the line of Prophets"-messenger of God's will to mankind, and as such not subject to change in form or content.

The Holy Quran was declared to be a revealed book and its authority was not to be questioned by any Muslim. The followers the faithful were asked to have faith in the final resurrection. There was to be a Day of Judgement when everybody was to be punished or rewarded according to his deads. The followers were required to perform five duties. They were required to recite Kalma and have a living faith in God and the prophet. They were required to give Zakat or one fortieth of their total income in charity. They were to say prayers or Namaz five times a day. They were to observe Rozas, the fasts during the month of Ramzan. They were to go on pilgrimage to Mecca or do Haj. They were not to worship any idols. Their mosques were to have no images or portraits. Each mosque was to be "an open court surrounded by Colonnades and unadorned, save for Quranic texts, a Miharab, a niche showing the direction of Mecca, a pulpit and minaret where the muezzins utter the call to the prayers."

The Holy Quran is held to be complete code of conduct for men in life in all its spheres of activity social, political, economic and ethical, in addition to being a scripture. To it were added the sayings and precepts of Mohammed, heard by or known to his companions, and transmitted from generation to generation

Together, the Holy Quran and the Prophet's sayings called the Traditions or Hadit, evolved in course of time a comprehensive system of ideal morality, and moral classification of human acts called Sharia or the way "by which man could walk pleasingly in the sight of God and hope to reach paradise[9].

If and when the Islamic community faces a problem whose solution is not possible-available either in the Quran or in the prophets saying, a way is provided to determine population the expressed will of the community as demonstrated by the slowly accumulating pressure of opinion over a long period of time. This principle, called ijma or consensus, was however, rejected by the stricter theologians from the third century onward of Islam-or the fear that, invoked for what is not expressly explicitly authorised by the Quran's or the Tradition, it may sanction "innovation" or "hearsay"[10]. Islam is a religion, and "Quran is a holy book of guidance. The prophet aimed at perfecting morality and spiritual values delineating in Quran and revelation.

The counterpart of Ijma is ijtihad, which literally means "exerting oneself". And it simply means "striving to discover". The true application of the teachings of Quran and Tradition to particular situation, and it may go against the plain sense of these teachings. According to classical doctrine, the range of ijtihad was progressively narrowed down, as successive generation, supported by "consensus", filled up the gas in the doctrinal and legal system. Finally no more gas remained to be filled, or only very insignificant and thereupon, "the gate of ijtihad was closed never again to be reopened"[11]. Niharanjan Roy[12] in his introductory address in 1971, at the seminar held in Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, on "India and Contemporary Islam" appropriately said:

"But in all this soul searching the fundamental truth as is Islam, that is, the truth of revolution, seems never to have been questioned. The structure of the society built upon the prescripts of this truth, is scrutinised and discussed, often with a high degree of passion, but approval of any change seems ever to be sought from its religious sanction, that is, if it can be found in the Quran itself and in the sunna which are supposed to be sources of guidance towards the right solution of all questions".

S. Bashiruddin[13], Librarian, Aligarh Muslim University in an article "Modernity and Traditionalism in Islam in Contemporary India", writes:

"Islam henceforth became a closed system", S. Bashiruddin[14] further elaborates;

"That in sum is the religious structure of Islamic thought as it developed in early Islam in the context of the historical situation obtaining in Arabia at the time. It served the spiritual needs of the unsophisticated Arab of the Seventh Century Arabia and provided him with a unifying principle in life unquestioning conformity to the word of Allah satisfied the Arabs' moral carvings,"

The founder of Islam died in 632 A.D. and by 732 the Muslims had established an empire starting from the "Confines of China to the Shores of the Mediterranean and from the Atlantic Ocean to the India[15]. Back at its complete record one may say that this empire reflected the light of the Hellenic Sun, when its hay day fled, and that it shone like a moon illuminating the darkest night of medieval Europe[16]. It was only an Empire the Muslims founded, but here, in this Empire "Between the middle of the eighth and the early part of the twelfth century, the Arabic speaking people hold their intellectual supremacy throughout the civilised world"[17].

"Neither Islam, nor Muslims, were responsible for the creation of Pakistan. Pakistan was the result of a very complex interplay of forces if we can say anything with certainty it is that vested interests on both sides played crucial role in bringing about vivisection of the country; Communalism is not the product of religion as many people think, but the product of misuse of religion by vested interests." .He further elaborated that Pakistan was not a creation of religious history, it was a creation of the modernists among Muslims.

Thus, the Muslims converse continued to be deprived, illiterate, and poor segment of the society. This may also, explain, the Muslim poverty and illiteracy, to a greater extent. The genesis of two-nation theory was purely political. The movement for creation Pakistan, as history tells us, came into existence not

because Muslims could not live with the Hindus but because a section of modern English educated, westernised Muslims felt that they will not get their due share of political and economic power in Independent India, and that they will be dominated by Hindu. It was poverty of the masses, as an important to which the partition of Indian may be traced. Poverty is cruel though curable. But it can be cured by economic pragmatism, and by no other ideology. Secularism cannot mean an anti-religion. However, it means that there is no state religion, all religions are given respect and freedom of activity, provided of course they do not impinge upon each other and provided further that foreign help, funds are not allowed to be channelled through ostensibly religious organizations for political purposes.

Mohammed Shabbir Khan[18] a distinguished visiting professor to different Universities in United States in his book "Islam: Social an Economic Structure", writes:

"The Muslims behavior with other communities i.e. even with those who are not kind to them. They should never feel distressed because Allah is always with those who are patient in their ways, restrain themselves and do good to themselves and others. Allah says: And do thou be patient, for thy patience is but from God; not grieve over them; and distress not thyself because of their plots. For God is with those who restrain themselves and those who do good.

"It must, however, be noted that even though Islam has preached peaceful co-existence with people belonging to other religions, getting the name of peaceful co-existence of our views with those of other religions. This is, as I have been able to understand, the essence of what is called secular society. The secular society does not prohibit any one belonging to any religion to follow his own views; but it does not at the same time suggest any compromise with the views of different religions".

Professor Mohammed Shabbir Khan[19] further elaborates:

Faith is matter of personal conviction and does not depend on worldly motives. When the idolators or Mecca asked out Prophet to compromise in matter of religion with the promise that

in return they will consider him as their kind, then the following Surah was revealed. It was revealed at a time and for a particular purpose but its significance remains for ever. While addressing our Prophet, Allah says:

"Say: Oye reject faith: I worship not that which ye worship, not will ye worship that which I worship. And I will not worship that which ye have been want worship, not will ye worship that which I worship, To you be your way, and to me mine".

It is thus clear that the Muslims as individuals and the community can live without any trouble in a secular country following their religion while being respectful to other religions. However, they have been warned not to compromise with the essence of their religion for any worldly benefits. This is so far as the peaceful co-existence of the Muslims with the other communities is concerned.

Khawaja Jamal[20]. in an article, "Modernism and Traditionalism in Islam," Writes:

"In the context of India Islam such a fresh look by Indian Muslim intellectuals is absolutely essential for giving enlightenment and guidance to the common Muslim who stands totally baffled and perplexed by the antagonistic pulls of theocracy and democracy, clericalism and secularism, traditionalism and modernity. The average Indian Muslim is more or less a split personality and must be helped to integrate himself'. The partition of the country on the basis of religion may be outcome of the split personality of Indian Muslim and psyche. But Asghar Ali Engineer[21], in an article, "India at Fifty"; Fault Lines in Two-nation Theory", however, asserts;

The demand for Pakistan was raised by a highly westernised Muslim, Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Jinnah was hardly a believer or a practising Muslim. Jinnah did not have even an elementary knowledge of Islam.

"Islam" is derived from the Arabic word "Salam" and has been presented to mean "Peace" or Surrender" depending upon the time and place of presentation. All the Prophets were considered equal within Islam and its followers had the opportunity to rise

to any position, according to ones capacity and capability. When this did not happen in India, the Hindus, more particularly its weaker section of the society, under the influence of Muslim Rulers, embraced Islam and became Muslim converts. But even after conversion, they were not treated equal and were not permitted to mix with rest of their Muslim brothers. They carried with them their earlier caste stigma.

Islam stands for a brotherhood of mankind and its peaceful existence with all other religions Muslim relationship with Muslim community and other communities and cosmopolitan attitude towards individuals needs to be understood and appreciated. Before prorogating the message of Islam leading to brotherhood, fraternity and equality of the followers of all religions of the world and the unity of mankind, it may be assured that the treatment of the believers of Islam towards their own community and other than their community is not different. The different standard of treatment to other community may be shamefully possible only in the state, which is secular system in name only.

Merwet Tallawy[22], Egyptian Ambassador, at the Fourth World Conference on Women held at Beijing During September, 1995, asserted;

"Islam is a religion of tolerance and peace but it is often wrongly portrayed in the west". Islam, when appeared on the World scene, was perhaps the first religion to give dignity and respect to women at a time when the plight of women was terrible. According to Tallowy:

"Islam spoke of human rights as early as the fourteenth century, before any Magna Cartra had been drawn up in Britain. And it gave women equality, as well as identity and economic status".

Modern India offers the Muslims the first big scale opportunity to make their social, cultural and political contribution to a society which, according to its constitutionally expressed intention, is aspiring to become a secular democracy in, which no religion will have a preferential treatment at the hands of the state and all groups and communities, whatever their religions

professions, can join together in building up a just, peaceful and equalitarian social order. The Indian Muslim like Faysal iba Husayn have to proclaim, profess and experience: "We are Indians, before being Muslims". India, thus offers a particularly significant and interesting locale for a study and liberal interpretation of Islam, of the lines of its futures development and the role, which it may aspire to play in this complex society, which is a veritable microcosm of the world at large. And it will bring credit to India and Islam by annulling partition and wash the discredit it carries that Muslims and Hindus cannot like peacefully.

Lost Sensitivity

Many Bedouins migrated to Mecca in search of jobs and ended up as casual workers loading and unloading the camel caravans and living a poverty-stricken life. Also, there were slaves and other weaker sections of society who, against tribal traditions, were being utterly neglected by the rich merchants whose main concern was the accumulation of wealth. They had, in their greed to accumulate, lost sensitivity to their suffering.

The Quran dealt with this social malaise and was greatly concerned with establishing a just society. It exhorted the rich to be sensitive to the suffering and required them to re-distribute their wealth and levied Zakat which was to be spent on the poor, needy, orphan; Widows, travellers, liberation of slaves and paying off debts. Thus it will be seen that it was quite a revolutionary programme.

To enforce what is good and eradicate what is evil is considered a spiritual and individual duty rather than a legal or political requirement. The primary concern of the Quran is to provide moral guidance and develop an appropriate atmosphere to set up a society, which is just and benevolent for all, including people of other faiths. It nowhere discusses any political doctrine or programme, much less the state structure. As long as the Prophet was alive, all problems were referred to him and his authority was supreme. He had also drawn up a covenant between people of different faiths in Madina, including the Jews, Christians and pagans. It is interesting to note that the Prophet had given full freedom to all to practice their respective religions. Thus,

Madina was a pluralist society and there was no attempt whatsoever to impose Islam on any unwilling soul. Thus it was very much 'secular' inasmuch as plurality of religion was recognised.

Political Crisis

However, after the death of the Prophet a political crisis developed which was sought to be resolved through historical experience as there was no categorical statement in the Quran or Hadith about his succession as per the Sunni tradition. Thus, there was a split among the Muslims on the question of succession to the Prophet.

Those who came to be termed later as Sunnis believed the Prophet has left no specific directive for his succession. The Shi's Muslims, on the other hand, believed that he had appointed Ali, his son-in-law and legatee as his successor. After his death, the Sunni Muslims developed the concept of Khilafah and the Shia' Muslims that of Imamah. According to the former, one of the elected companions of the Prophet would head the state and look after the affairs of the nascent community with mutual consultation among the Muslims.

The Shi' as believed that one of the members of the Prophet's family through Ali and his daughter Fatima would look after the spiritual and political affairs of the community.

In the course of time, neither the Khilafah nor the Imamah survived in the political sense. Imamah never acquired a concrete political form as the Imams never headed any state and were severely persecuted by the Umayyad or Abbasid caliphs. The state during the Umayyad period and later the Abbasid period cannot be described as an Islamic state. These were primarily monarchies based on the principle of hereditary succession. These caliphs had no religious or spiritual qualification at all. They built their empire on the basis of the sword. Maulana Maududi, the founder of the Jamat-e-Islami, has dealt with this problem in his book "Khilafat Aur Mulukiyyat". When the Abbasids seized political power from the Umayyads through a bloody fight two Muslim rulers came into existence.

Quranic Morality

The Muslim political theorists had to develop a new political theory- that of two simultaneous caliphs ruling over the Muslim world. Later, of course, many caliphs and rulers, Fatimids in Egypt, Umayyads in Spain, Abbasids in Baghdad, Ghaznavids and other in Central Asia came into existence. Not only that the Turkish generals captured real power and the Abbasid caliphs became mere figureheads. Thus, the political theories had to undergo repeated changes in the Muslim world. All a ruler could claim was that he was enforcing the Islamic Shari'ah to claim Muslim support. But even the Shari'ah was never implemented in its real spirit.

Fallacy of a separate nation

In 1946, when the Muslim League's demand for partition of India and creation of a separate state of Pakistan was being seriously debated, someone asked M.A. Jinnah, "You keep talking of Pakistan. Could you explain what is your concept of this Pakistan? What do you really mean by it? Jinnah replied, "Of course. In just five words". Then he uttered those five famous words: "We Muslims are a nation". And he went on to elaborate his thesis of cultural difference, incompatibility, and impossibility of co-existence with Hindus, and so on.

According to him Mohammedans of undivided India constituted a separate nation. In 1757, after the Battle of Plassey, the British became our rulers instead of Muslims. Similarly, in 1947 thought the British had to quit, the Hindu nation could not get the ruling power in its own hands because the new rulers who have come to power neither believe that Hindus are a nation nor consider themselves as part of the Hindu nation.

The plain but harsh truth is that in August 1947, the Muslim 'nation' of undivided India gained freedom, but not so the Hindus. The Muslims got recognition as a separate nation and a separate territory was carved out as their national homeland. They established their own state in that territory, and that state is still conducting its affairs by holding the cultural aspirations, honour and interests of the Muslims of Bharaiavarsha as its responsibility.

But Hindus neither gained recognition as a nation, nor their own State, nor control over their national homeland.

Even after partition the country, on religious basis on the premise that we are not one people but two people lent we are one people with twelve crores of Muslim population after independence. We the people of India, are Secular.

It may be recalled tradition of customs, rituals, festivals and tradition give a distinct identity to the Kashmiri Pandit community and needs to be preserved and nurtured along with other important facets of the community life and beloved mother tongue, Kashmiri, which has been enriched by the writings of Lal Ded and Nund Rishi, Habba Khatoon and Arnimal, Parmanand and Shamas Faquir, Masterji, Mehjoor, Azad, Nadim and scores of other poets, writers and thinkers.

Festivals, rituals and customs have had relevance in the past, these are even relevant today and they shall remain relevant for all times to come. The relevance is manifold. Firstly, they give us a distinct identity as Kashmiri Pandits. We know about various festivals, which are associated with different communities. Durga Puja is for Bengalis what Ganesh Puja is for Maharashtrians. Ayyapa Puja in the south, Holi in the Braja Dham and Jagannath festival in Orissa are very well known. Kashmiris are proud of their socio-religious festival of Shivaratri and other local rituals. Shivaratri the crown of festivals, is spread over a full fortnight of the Phalguna.

It is a socio-religious function that is the very part of their life. On the first day of the dark fortnight, called Hurya Okdoh the wholesale cleaning of the house, painting and decorating begins with gusto. The pooja room called Thokur Kuth and the front door called Dar are specially cleaned, one for the pooja and the other to welcome Shiva and Parvati, whose communion is the real essence of Shivaratri. The first week up to the Hurya Satam, is busy time for washing, cleaning and collecting the required items. The eighth day called Hurya Aetham is the day of the presiding deity of the valley, Maa Sharika. On this day they have Havan at Hari Parbat and night long Keertan. This is followed by Hurya Navam, Dyara Daham, and Gada Kah.

On these days apart from usual pooja, prescribed items of vegetables and / or fish and meat are cooked according to the custom of every home. Ladies go to their parents' house for bathing and washing and return to their own homes with new clothes, a new kangri (fire-pot) with a silver tsalan dangling behind it. Twelfth day is known as Vager Bah and it is customary to have Vager pooja on that day, which is the first formal pooja of the Shivaratri. The thirteenth day called Herach Truvah is the day of the main pooja. The eldest member of the family keeps fast for the day. Vatuk is brought by the potter which comprises a 'No 't Resh Dul, Dul, Saniwaer, Mancha Waer, Dhupu Zur, Sani Potul, assortment of Parva and Taekya. These are cleaned, filled with water and then arranged in the prescribed order in the pooja room. Nariwan and garlands are tied round these items. The No't representing the kalasha and some other pots are also filled with walnuts. The actual pooja begins in the night when all the family members assemble in the pooja room for the purpose. The Vatuk, representing various Devatas and Bhairavas, is worshipped under the directions of the Kula-purohita (the family priest). This is an elaborate pooja for a good three hours and is followed by a sumptuous feast. All the items cooked are first offered to the Vatak Nath. Next comes Shiva Chaturdashi. This is popularly called 'Salaam'.

On this day friends from the Muslim community would come to felicitate Kashmiri Pandits. Also beggars, bards and street dancers would come to take their due on this festive occasion, and salute the head of the family with the words 'Salaam'. On this day children receive Heraech Kharch the pocket allowance for their enjoyment. The usual pastime is a game of shells which creates a lot of enthusiasm. On the Amavasya day the culminating pooja of the festival is held and the entire paraphernalia of Vatuk is taken off from its place. In the evening a very interesting event is observed. It is called Dub Dub or knock knock. Actually one member of the family goes out and returns with a glass of water. The door is shut on him and when he knocks at the door a conversation takes place. He is asked who he is. He replies that he is Ram bror and has come with wealth, riches, good wishes for health and happiness, food and means of livelihood and all the good things. Then the door is opened. The walnuts are broken

to take the kernel out and along with cakes made of rice flour are first offered to the deity and then taken as prashada.

From the next day begins an arduous task of distributing the walnuts among friends, relatives and neighbours. The closer the relationship the larger is the number of walnuts given to them. The highest number, in hundreds, goes to the in-laws of the newlywed daughters. The only thing that remains is the disposal of the residual material i.e.; grass seats of the Vatuk, the flowers and Naervan tied round these pots and other such things. These are dropped into the river on the Tial Ashtami, and this marks the grand finale to this great festival.

The people's emotions can be exploited either way. They can be incited for and against India. Most politicians in Kashmir play such games. Even Sheikh Abdullah was no exception. Looking back, the ethnic policy then pursued by the Sheikh helped the growth of fundamentalism.

In the pre-1947 days, the Sunnis, the dominant group in the valley, constituted half the population. The rest was made up of Hindus and Shias. Even today, there are about a million Shias in the state. While the Shias were engaged in handicrafts, the Sunnis dominated agriculture but mainly as landless cultivators. The Hindus were either landlords or employees of the state administration.

Being a Sunni, Sheikh Abdullah was often accused of being partial to his sect. He introduced land reforms soon after assuming power in 1947. Fine, but ironically, he virtually denied compensation to Hindu landlords.

The Sheikh was obviously partial to the Sunnis, he was surely a proud Kashmiri. He played a major role in evolving the ethnic identity of the Kashmiris, broadly called Kashmiriat. This identity does not have much to do with their ancient culture. His aim was mainly to isolate the Kashmiri Muslims from other Muslims. For this purpose, he adopted four different methods:

Isolated the Jammu Muslims (mostly Punjabi-speaking and pro-Pakistan);

Prevailed upon Nehru not to cross Uri during the advance of the Indian Army (for beyond Uri lay regions where the Muslims were anti-Sheikh);

Denied refugee status to non-Muslims who migrated from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) to the valley (they were forcibly marched off to Jammu from the valley); and

Opposed the secularization of the Kashmiri Muslim society.

Interestingly, the Sheikh was even ready to rehabilitate Muslims from Central Asia in the Valley, but not the Hindu refugees from Punjab. In the early 1950s, the Sheikh invited the Tibetan Muslims to come and settle in Kashmir. But he refused to allow even a single Tibetan Buddhist refugee to settle in the valley, not even in Ladakh. So much for the Sheikh's secularism.

The Sheikh died in September, 1982. Before his death he made his son, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, the President of the National Conference, and asked the Kashmiris to place their trust in him, for, he said, his son would accomplish what he had not been able to.

It must be said that at one stage Jawaharlal Nehru did try to help Sheikh Abdullah. But before his death, the Indian Prime Minister realised that the Sheikh had been playing games.

B.N. Mullik, then head of the Intelligence Bureau, has recorded Nehru's reaction in his book, "My Years with Nehru", he specifically writes:

"Suddenly to our utter surprise, Pt. Nehru started talking bitterly against Sheikh Abdullah's communalism (at a Cabinet Committee meeting). He traced the Sheikh's history from 1930 onwards and mentioned how he had started his career with the Muslim Conference, which was an out and out communal organisation. He said that as a result of pressures from outside and seeing developments of the State people's movement in the rest of India and for purely tactical reasons and probably on the advice of some of his more liberal followers, the Sheikh had converted the Muslim Conference to give it a non-communal appearance. At this time, Pandit Nehru suddenly looked at me and enquired whether I had not come across some information of possible

British connivance in that movement (Muslim Conference). I replied in the affirmative".

Mullik further wrote: "He continued his talk against the Sheikh and mentioned all his communal activities throughout the period he had acted as the National Conference leader. It was the Pakistan aggression which had mellowed him a little for a short time, because the tribesmen had committed gruesome atrocities on the Muslim population in the valley. But as soon as he became the Prime Minister, he came out in his true colours, praised Bakshi and Sadiq for their completely non-communal outlook...Pundit Nehru said that all the trouble in Kashmir was due to the Sheikh's communal outlook and it was he who was not allowing the state to settle down to peace and stability"[23].

Indian secularism provides protection, among a billion others, to the world's second largest Muslim population. This Islam, for obvious reason, has to be Indian and composite in its texture. Pakistan was born in hostility to India. It would have a problem of national self-definition if this anti-India, Edge were not in a perpetual state of accentuation. The creation of Bangladesh in 1971 demonstrated that cultural, civilisational identity supersedes religious links. An unnerved Pakistani establishment has since been working overtime to manufacture a double and triple distilled Islam. That will some how blur, even erase, all other identities[24]. Perpetual hostility to India as a guarantor of nationhood enjoins upon the Pak establishment to keep radicalizing its Islam until it becomes totally unsubcontinental. In other words the world is witnessing the evolution of history's most intolerant, fundamentalist regime unless the Pakistani people are quickly brought into play through a democratic process.

A Number of Islamic countries claim that they are Islamic states and that secularism has no place in their society. In fact, some primordial Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia consider secularism a great sin.

There is no concept of an Islamic state in the Quran. It gives a concept of the society, not of any state. In fact, a book of guidance cannot involve itself in any time-bound concepts. Moral guidance has permanent value. Whereas a concept like what form

a state structure will take is limited both by time and space. In the period when the Quran was being revealed, Arabia had no state whatsoever whereas there existed in Rome and Persia what can be called monarchy.

When the Prophet started preaching, he was basically concerned with the social malaise rather than any political problem. Society in the Arab peninsula at the time was riddled with many problems. The tribal bonds were breaking down and a new commercial society was being born in Mecca, which was the centre of high finance and commerce on an international route. The trade caravans passed through Mecca, which traded, between China and the Roman Empire. There was the Bedouin society in the desert rigidly bound by tribal customs and traditions on the one hand, and, the Mecca urban society dealing in high finance and trade, on the other.

It is a case of cultural vacuum in which Kashmiri Pandits are floating at present. And for this they alone are not to blame.

Was not Budshah, the supposed hero of Kashmiri secular tradition, who began the process, which eventually turned Kashmir into a West Asian, cultural colony? It was he who brought hundreds of theologians, artisans, musicians and others from West Asia, as well as Central Asia, and settled them in Kashmir giving them all the royal patronage. He seemed to have no consideration for the devastating effect it had on indigenous artistic and cultural traditions. The ud and the rabab came with a host of other musical instruments, relegating the muruj, the mridang, patah, veena and flute to the realm of forgotten things; the Hafizas occupied the dancing floors which were earlier brought to life by the nimble-footed local dancers displaying the charm of forty-nine emotions.

And more than everything else, Persian was made the court language, stopping the development of the Kashmiri language in its tracks at a time when it was emerging from the Prakrit - Apabhramsha stage to assume the form of a distinct modern Indo-Aryan language. Needless to say kashmiri never recovered from the setback. With the arrival of Persian artisans, indigenous crafts suffered an unnatural death. Painters and sculptors started migrating to neighbouring princedoms for lack of patronage. The Sharada

script, which was holding its sway all along the Himalayan belt from Himachal princedoms in the east to Ghazni in the west, began to count its days. (Incidentally Budshah's ancestor who founded the dynasty and captured the throne of Kashmir by guile was from Swat).

Slowly the channels of indigenous creativity got choked. When the Mughals displaced the Sultans from power, Yusuf Shah Chak was having his fling with Zooni, who later became Habba Khatoon, to the beats of a hybrid Iranian- Kashmiri music. And when the Afghans overran the valley, almost all vestiges of original Kashmiri culture were done away with. Somewhere in the process the pheran in its present form was smuggled in from some Arab land. Along with it came the tumbaknari from Morocco and became an essential feature of Kashmiri folk music. The Sanskrit metars and the lilting cadences of early Kashmiri lyrics appearing in the "Banasur Katha" and "Sukha dukha Charit", as well as the "Vaak", lost ground to Ghazals and Masnavis with borrowed West Asian imagery and difficult Turanian and Persian Bahars. The Afghans completed this cultural colonization with the introduction of gay culture represented by the 'Bachaas' or boy dancers of the "Bacha Nagma", and this came to be celebrated as the most representative Kashmiri dance form.

JESUS IN KASHMIR

Christianity is a living religion in India. Christians have been playing equally important roles in the cultural synthesis of the great land of unity in diversity.

The unique feature of 'unity in diversity' has expressed itself in all spheres of our social life, in its material as well as spiritual aspect. It is like a bright lamp covered on all sides with glasses of various colours. The inside light appears to take on the different hues and shades according to the angle from which one view it. It is this wondrous variety of expressions that has unfortunately, made some people say that ours is not one society, not one nation, but a 'multinational country'!

Not only that Christians are attached to the Lord, the holy message of Christ has influenced the lives, works and philosophies of some of the greatest saints of the land-past and present. Great

saints like Madhvacharya talked about "eternal hell", a description never discussed in earlier thoughts and proves beyond doubt the influence of the contemporary Christian missionaries carrying the message of Christ on the coastal lands. Of present generations, majority of the contemporary Christian missionaries carrying the message of Christ on the coastal lands. Of present generations, majority of the saints, including Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda had been following the teachings of the Lord. Sri Ramakrishna, who Himself practised all the major religions of the world regularly prayed before him. There used to be a picture of Christ and Buddha, each regularly worshipped by the saint in his dwelling apartment at Dakshineshwar.

In the spread of education and culture, the contribution of Christian missionaries during the last few centuries had been far more than anybody else. It is interesting, in a book on spirit of Indian culture to record the immortal name of the saint who brought the message of Christ to this holy land and made it a part of our mainstream of homogenous philosophy. There are, of course theories too that the Lord Himself lived in Kashmir and meditated. There are also theories that Jesus came to Varanasi and learnt many contemporary subjects. That is only left to historians to explore[25].

Christian religion was named after Jesus who was called Christ afterwards. Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary. He was born in Judea. Exact years of his birth and crucifixion are not known but it is believed that he was born sometime between 4 and 1 BC and was brought up in a nearby town Nazareth in Galilee.

In his childhood a desire to meet some yogis and to know God brought him to India where he joined and lived in Buddhist monasteries which were popular in those days. He travelled up to Jagannath Puri (In Orissa), which has always fascinated saints & seers.

Spending approximately 14 to 16 years mostly in travelling and some time practicing Yogic disciplines in India he went back to Jerusalem around 29 to 30 AD where he again joined the Essence group which was a branch of Judaism based on the Old

Testament and which stressed on the purity of heart and honesty in behaviour. He tried to preach the similar theory of purity and piousness of mind and behaviour but he condemned the worship of mythological gods and the traditional Jewish rituals[26].

A Russian tourist, Nicholas Notovitch, made a journey to Afghanistan, India, Punjab, and Ladakh etc. During his journey he discovered some stunning facts about the early years of Jesus Christ (before 30 AD) when he was in India. Mr. Notovitch, anxious to know more about Jesus, made a thorough research and obtained the informations from Buddhist monasteries, especially the Hemis[27] Monastery, which revealed the secret that Jesus had lived in India, learned yoga, and studied Buddhist scriptures. In the foreword to his book "The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ", he writes:

"Finally, in 1887, I made an excursion into India, the most admired country of the dreams of my childhood... In the course of one of my visits to a Buddhist convent, I learned from the chief Lama that there existed very ancient memories about the life of Jesus Christ in the archives of Lhasa (the capital of Tibet), and that a few of the larger monasteries possessed copies and translations of these previous chronicles..."

"During my sojourn in Leh, the capital of Ladakh I visited Hemis, a large convent on the outskirts of the city, where I was informed by the Lama that the monastic libraries contained a few copies of the manuscript in question...with the aid of my interpreter, who translated from the Tibetan tongue, I carefully transcribed the verses related to Jesus Christ as they were read by the Lama".

A book called, "The Crucifixion by an Eye Witness"[28], contains the translation of a letter (in Latin) from a member of the Essene group to his friend in Alexandria seven years after crucifixion.

Jesus had offended the priesthood and they did not like it at all. And they sought revenge. In the synagogues the priests would question Jesus intensely, hoping to catch him in the wrong. They never could. Jesus knew what he was saying.

Nevertheless, they felt challenged. Jesus would not spare them. To let him continue to preach meant that their own power would be sapped. Among the priesthood there were the Sadduces (the meaning of the word is not clear) who accepted only the written laws of the Jews. They formed the majority in the Sanhedrin (the Jewish Parliament's Judicial Council) and they did not like the ferment in the country caused by the teachings of Jesus.

In the end, Jesus was arrested. It is not clear on what ground the arrest was made. All that we can gather from the story of Jesus is that the Sadduces were determined to silence him at all costs. They took him to the Roman Viceroy, a man called Pontius Pilate and though he seemed willing to let Jesus go, the Jewish priesthood demanded the death sentence, which was reluctantly granted.

When the Jews carried out a death sentence, the practice was to stone the criminal to death. The Roman way was crucifixion. Many scholars now believe that, whatever the gospels may say, perhaps the Roman Viceroy was really willing to see Jesus crucified, so that he did not pose a political challenge to Roman authority, and that the Jewish priesthood was less guilty.

But over the centuries the Jews came to be blamed for the crucifixion of Jesus. Not even the belief that Jesus rose from the dead (a central theme in Christianity) would shake the further belief among Christians that the physical doing away of Jesus was the work of the Jews. The Christians never forgave the Jews for what they considered was a crime - or something more than a crime. It is strange that this is so despite Christ's own teachings that one must love one's enemy and turn the right cheek if smitten on the left. Though in recent years the Christian Church has taken a more enlightened view of the role of Jews, the suspicion, if not the active dislike of Jews, has persisted among Christians.

In the centuries that followed, the Jews have paid a grievous price for whatever their ancestors in Jerusalem did. In medieval Europe the Jews were hated and persecuted as if every Jew was an enemy of Jesus Christ. Stringent laws were passed against Jews. They were compelled to live in their own quarters called ghettoes, insulated from the rest of the population. They were not allowed to own land. They had therefore to turn to other professions like

money-lending. If one reads Shakespeare's play The Merchant of Venice, he finds that the villain in the play is a Jewish moneylender called Shylock. To this day, the word Shylock has come to mean a vicious moneylender who would stop at nothing. That is very unfair. Shakespeare's characterization of Jews is very unfair, though at one stage, the dramatist puts the following words in the mouth of Shylock:

Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same summer and winter as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?[29]

But Jesus did not die on the cross. His Essene friends helped him to come out from the tomb where he was kept, lying exhausted and unconscious (and was considered to be dead by the people). Secretly they treated him until he recovered. Afterwards, he again came to India, settled in Kashmir, travelled around, and remained in India until his death.

If all of the New Testament had been lost, it has been said, and only the Sermon on the Mount had managed to survive these two thousand years of history, we would still have all that is necessary for following the teachings of Jesus the Christ[30]. Jesus died on the Cross. He resurrected and delivered sermons on the Mount.

His being in India is an established fact which has been described and documented by many writers and such books about the secret life of Jesus Christ are readily available in the religious books stores in the USA The Dead Sea Scrolls written in Hebrew, Aramaic and mostly in Greek (between 150 BC and 100 AD) and also Nag Hammadi literature have thrown enough light on early Christianity and also the Essene system of living (which resembled Buddhist monastic orders). From the facts collected, it concludes that Jesus as well as John the Baptist were both active members of the Essene group that lived in Jericho, close to Galilee and Jerusalem.

The book "The Crucifixion by Eye Witness", tells about the survival of Jesus from crucifixion and gives the details how his Essene friends secretly helped him and saved him. It further tells that Jesus stayed for about him and saved him. It further tells that Jesus stayed for about six months in the are of the Essenes, and in the last, he went into solitude and even his disciples did not know where he went except a few elderly Essenes (and his very close ones).

Looking into the practicality of the punishment, it takes a few days for a young man to die on the cross. It is a slow and torturous death. Jesus stayed on the cross for only 7 to 8 hours as he was taken down from the cross the same day around sunset. So, from the medical point of view, it is also a positive probability that he must have been alive when he was taken down.

It was a custom to break the legs of the criminals to ensure their death after taking them down from the cross. But, the legs of Jesus were not broken which shows a sympathetic move from the side of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea.

There are two entries in the New Testament which also confirm that Jesus was alive after crucifixion. "Mary Magdalene ... Sees the stone taken away from the sepulchrue. The she runs and comes to Simon Peter, and to the other disciples whom Jesus loved, and says unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him"[31].

"And she (Mary Magdalene) went and told them that (she) had been seen of her, believed not"[32]. These statements tell that Jesus was taken away by his (Essene) friends to whom she refers as they, and when she meets Jesus in person she tells about him being alive and safe. Thus, from the above evidences, it is confirmed that Jesus did not die on the cross. He recovered, and then he proceeded towards India. He came to Kashmir and settled over there. Andreas Faber Kaiser in is book "Jesus Died in Kashmir" writes:

"A journalist and a scholar of comparative religion) published by Gordon and Cremonesi, London, in 1977, tells the accounts of the journey of Jesus in India (after crucifixion) and explains in

detail how he lived and died in Kashmir. He gives the reference of 234 books (of English, Urdu, Persian, French and German languages which are related to this topic) in his bibliography, and also writes the names and the addresses of the people who helped him in his research work".

"Not being able to bear the hardships of the long journey, Mary died at what is now the small town of Muree, which was named in honour of her and is situated about forty miles from Taxila and thirty from Rawalpindi. The place where she is buried is known as Pindi Point, and the sepulchre itself is called *Mai Mari da Asthan*, meaning 'resting place of Mother Mary'. According to Jewish custom, the tomb is oriented eastwest".

This is the reason that there is no grave of Mary in Jerusalem or anywhere else in the nearby states and Christians have no logical answer for it. After his survival from crucifixion, when Jesus came to Kashmir, he was in a kind of hiding so he mostly kept quiet about his past and also adopted another name so he could become acquainted with the common community of Kashmir. His friends used to call him '*Esah*' which was a localized version of 'Jesus' in the vernacular language. So he became famous by the name of *'Esah'* in Kashmir

Andreas Feber Kaiser mentions that quite a few Muslim writers and historians of Kashmir have written about Jesus who was called '*Esah*' in Kashmir. Giving the account of Jesus's social and family life in Kashmir, according to his findings and on the basis of his research, he infers that Jesus would have been of about 85 years old when he died. The grave of Jesus is called *Rozabal* which means the grave of a prophet[33].

Andreas Feber Kaiser further writes, "The tomb that Thomas is reputed to have raised over the body of Jesus is located in the district of Khanyar in the center of the Kashmiri capital, Srinagar".

A renowned and learned Yogi Swami Ram Tirth popularly Known as Swami Ram once visited Kashmir where he found the grave of Jesus Christ in Srinagar, Swami Ram was born in a Brahman family in Gujranwala district in West Punjab in 1873. After doing an M.A. in mathematics in 1895 he was appointed

as a professor in his own institution. In 1901 he took sanyas and travelled to Kashmir and the Himalayas, visited Japan in 1902, went to America for about two years and came back to Bombay travelling through the European countries in 1904. He expired in 1906.

When Swami Ram was in Kashmir, he discovered the grave of Jesus Christ and, on inquiry, he learned more about the stay of Jesus in Kashmir after his crucifixion. He says, "He (Jesus) was a very good, pure man. He was son of a carpenter (Joseph), he was a very poor boy... you know Jesus did not die when he was crucified. This is a fact, which may be proved. He was in a state called samadhi. He made his escape and came back to live in Kashmir. Ram has been there and has found many signs of (Jesus) Christ having lived there. There are many places, many cities called by the same names as the places of Jerusalem. There is a grave (of Jesus Christ) about 2,000 years old. It is called the grave of '*Esah*' which is the name of Christ in Hindustani language". Swami Ram further says that Jesus healed his wounds with a kind of special ointment after his survival (from crucifixion) and that ointment heals all sorts of wounds miraculously.

Now we know that Jesus was in India before 30 AD and he was affiliated with the Buddhist monasteries where he studied their literature and also learned yog in those days. The opposition from the church authorities to publish this information, and a very obvious hidden threat on the life of Mr. Notovitch in the words of the High authority of Rome, "... You will create numberless enemies. You are still young..."

SHARDA, THE CRADLE OF HINDU CIVILIZATION

On the occasion of Sharda Ashtami August 30, 1998 eminent scholars of exiled Kashmiri Hindu community assembled at the Sanjewani Sharda Kendra Jammu for annual celebration of the Sharda festival along with large number of Kashmiri Pandits from all walks of life. Kashmiri Hindus have been celebrating the Sharda Ashtami festival from times immemorial at Sharda Devi Shrine itself till 1946 A.D.

Learned speakers highlighted the significance of 'Sharda' for Kashmir and relevance of its restoration to the Hindu community.

Apart from being the most pious and celebrated pilgrimage centre of the Hindu world, Sharda has been the most prestigious seat of learning, which was visited by Hsun-T-Sang the famous Chinese traveler in 632 A.D and was here for two long years. He writes, he found the priests at Sharda with exceptional mental gifts and intellectual acumen who brought glory by their peerless contributions to the spiritual thought of the mankind.

Alberuni the famous Arab scholar (996-1032 A.D) mentions Sharda Shrine, Prof. Max Mullar, Tagore Dr. Stain and scores of visitors have emphasized the sanctity and serenity of this seat of learning.

Shardha being Mecca and Jerusalem for the Hindus the world over, beneficence can be judged by a single factor.

Mecca attracts at least two million pilgrims every year. Assuming each pilgrim spends three thousand pounds sterling. Arabia draws an income of 6,000,000,000, per annum. The population of Saudi Arabia is said to be 6,000,000. It works out an annual income of 1,000 per person including women and children or 5,000 per family as estimated by Anwar Sheikh. Rural of Kashmir always find their coffers empty inspite of massive funds from government of India Sharda will fetch them even more than when centre can give.

Shardha Peetha

Shardha is the real identity of Kashmir. The valley was called Shardha Peetha for many centuries. Those who talk about Kashmir and Kashmiriat forget that in practice they are following an alien culture, which has nothing to do with Kashmir, Kashmiri language and Kashmiriat.

Culture is the deciding factor of history. People are low or high according to the nature of its culture, which tends to be self-preserving owing to its age-old, time-tested customs, traditions and conventions. Kashmiri culture evolved over countless centuries

cannot be brushed aside and wished away. That is why Sharda is today being looked at, as it represents the highest values that human beings can obtain from educational enlightenment of a special type. For retaining the cultural identity after geographical dislocation there are a few basic-pre-requisites. The society has to be well knit and united with well-defined and properly focused objectives.

The symbols that have been lost have to be resurrected or re-created. The society has to be proud of its culture and that pride has to be translated into action through achievements, individually and collectively, in various fields of human endeavour. These achievements have to be recorded and projected to future generations. The community has to shake off negative tendencies like self-denigration, and cast away redundant and meaning fewer rituals.

Sharda Teerath

The Shrine:

The Sharda Shrine is hexa-angular in shape. There are accounts of pilgrims who have claimed that the deity bestows mercy on her votaries. A black stone image of Saraswati lies over a spring. The spring water is almost hidden to the human eye. It is believed that the Sharda Spring itself is the 'Amrit Kalush' that Manaspurti Sharda stored in Kashmir.

Geography:

M.S. Stein, Ph. D., Principal Oriental College, Lahore (an English man) visited Kashmir in 1888 driven by his interest towards the antiquities and history of the Valley. He found the Sharda Shrine in the west of Kashmir near Keran in the Upper Kishen Ganga Valley about 130 Kms. from Srinagar and 140 Kms from Muzaffarabad in the prominent and commanding position above the banks of Madhumati river at a spot when it merges with the Holy Kishen Ganga.

Sharda presently under illegal and forced occupation of Pakistan is one of the oldest pilgrimage centres in India. Like Amar Nath it nestles amid grandest mountains and forest sceneries of the world.

Sharda had the distinction of housing most prestigious heritages, libraries, studies and Gowshallas with abundant milk.

This seat of learning was also famous as university conferring degrees/certificates of honour on candidates in varied subjects including painting. Till 1947 this sacred place was guarded by the State Army so that its sanctity could be ensured. It is obvious that priceless manuscripts and literature lying in libraries would have been destroyed by the Pak Army and Civilian bigots once the Dogra Hindu rule in J&K came to an end. Because of the sanctity attached to Sharda Peetha (one of the ancient names of Kashmir), even today at the time of holy thread ceremony, "agnopavit" a child in Southern parts of India is asked to move seven steps forward towards Sharda (Kashmir) in mind and then turn back symbolizing to have acquired knowledge from Sharda.

On the way to the intellectual victories of the Adya Shankaracharya all over the country, Kashmir became a leading and important centre, where, in Sharada peetha, he participated in many debates with eminent scholars of different religious and philosophical cults and faiths and established the supremacy of the Vedanta and was consequently honoured at the seat of 'Omniscient'.

The credit goes to Kashmir for producing the great Historians and litterateurs like Kalhan and Ratnakar. The authentic history of Kashmir before the Muslim invasion is well preserved and available in the famous Sanskrit work 'Raj Tarangini', a historical master - piece of Kalhan[34].

SINDHU DARSHAN

About four decades ago, there was an unfortunate serious suggestion from certain quarters that the word "Sindhu" should be dropped from our national anthem - "Jana Gana Mana" - Punjab, Sindhu, Gujarat Maratha, Dravide Utkal Banga, on the ground that the province of Sind was no longer a part of India. Luckily, this suggestion was not only dismissed by the Government, but Sindhi, the language spoken by millions of Hindus who had to leave Sind in the wake of the partition of India, was included in the eighth schedule of the Constitution of India granting it the status of a "Language of India".

In 1960, when the Indus Water Treaty was signed between India and Pakistan and three "western rivers" - the Indus (*Sindhu*), the Jhelum (*Vitasta*) and the Chenab (*Chandrabhaga*) were allotted to Pakistan, India "getting" only the Sutluj (*Shatadru*) the Beas (*Vipasha*) and the Ravi (*Iravati*), in popular concept it meant that India had no longer any connection with the Sindhu river.

In popular mind, it also meant India giving up her ancient civilisational moorings known as the Indus Valley Civilisation first and later as the Harappan civilisation, mentally conceding the claim that this civilisation depicted the past of Pakistan only. In any case, the people who had nurtured such an advanced civilisation were not, it was dinned into the minds of Indians, the forefathers the modern-day Indians, who are being described as descendants of the Aryan "invaders" who had destroyed the Harappan civilisations.

Both these myths have now been exploded with the National Democratic Alliances (NDA) officially taking up the annual Sindhu Darshan Yatra along with the active participation of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee Home Minister L.K. Advani and Tourism and Culture Minister Kumar, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Chaman Lal Gupta representing the Government of India and J&K Governor Girish Saxena and Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah were the enthusiastic participants in the "yatra" on June 7 and 8 the Prime Minister flying from Manali to inaugurate the function on June 7, 2000. Goa Governor Mohd. Fazal and Minister of State for Railways Bangaru Laxman were also participated in the function.

At the request of Dr. Farooq Abdullah, tourism Minister Ananth Kumar arranged to lay the foundation stone of a "Sindhu Ghat" (the decision having been taken overnight). The function was held at village Shey, 15 kilometres north of Leh, the headquarters of the Ladakh region, with the Buddhist clergy and the population enthusiastically participating in the function. The Union Tourism Ministry is setting up a cultural centre at the venue.

The Yatra has rekindled the fond memories of pre-partition days when the Sindhu was very much an "Indian" river. Despite

partition and the Indus Waters Treaty, the Sindhu still remains an Indian River, which later flows into first the Pakistani occupied portion of the State of Jammu and Kashmir and then Pakistan proper. Originating from Mansarovar in Tibet, Sindhu enters India at Demchok and flows for another 450 kilometers before entering PoK at Batalik, the name made immortal by the exploits of the Indian armed forces during the Kargil war.

Contrary to the general impression that the river has been "given away" to Pakistan under the Indus Waters Treaty, India can still utilize the waters of this river not only for generation of hydro electric power (in which there is no consumptive use of water) but certain traditional irrigation rights (which is a consumptive use of water) have been safeguarded in the Treaty. If the Jammu and Kashmir Government takes a good look at the Treaty, it will find that several minor irrigation schemes can be constructed for growing crops from the Indus, the Jhelum and the Chenab, the treaty notwithstanding.

Archaeological discoveries since Independence have established that the Harappan civilization had extended right upto today's Haryana, Rajasthan and even Uttar Pradesh. The Lothal site in Saurashtra region of Gujarat, Dhola Vira in Kutch and the very recently excavated Rakhi Garhi site near Sirsa in Haryana have proved that today's Indians are very much the descendants of the Harappan people and the story of an Aryan invasion is at best a concoction by the British archaeologists and their Macaulay-brand Indian successors.

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in effect emphasized these vies in his speech at the yatra function on June 7, 2000 when he referred to the Rig Vedic hymn that described the Sindhu as a mighty river whose roar could be heard upto heaven and which drew smaller rivers in its swirling flow etc. He also recalled that Lord Buddha himself had mentioned Sindhu region when he had mentioned that the horse which was carrying him towards what is now Bodh Gaya, had come from Sindh Pradesh

During the 1999 river flowed quietly through the Kargil hills as the mountain peaks turned red with blood. Flights were cancelled, the number of tourists dipped and the season was a damp squib.

A year later, Sindhu the cradle of Indian civilisation will be hub of tourist activities when the tourism ministry organizes Sindhu Darshan between June 7.9. 2000 tipped to become a mega cultural show, Prime Minister Vajpayee, who will also lay the foundation stone of a 'Sindhu Cultural Centre', would inaugurate the festival.

Political heavyweight, celebrities, artistes and tourists would grace the occasion once they land in "Shangri La"- "the moon land". Ladakh could benefit the maximum out of the whole event, says tourism minister Anantha Kumar. From a mere religious sojourn (when first started in 1994), the Sindhu Darshan would open the gates for high-quality tourism in Ladakh. The festival, a salute to the brave Indian soldiers, shows India's cultural diversity and integrity. The folk dances from Kinnaur, Ladakh, Lavani from Maharashtra, Yakshgana from Karnataka, Bihu from Assam, Chhahu from Mayurbhanj and Chhej, all preach the message of national unity. The highlight would be Arunachal Pradesh CM pouring Brahmaputra waters in the Sindhu.

Hasan Khan, MP from Ladakh emphasises: "Most important, the significance of Sindhu has been realised at last and Ladakhis are getting worldwide exposure." Such festivals help in building a strong national feeling between the rest of India and the Ladakhis isolated for almost eight months due to harsh climatic conditions. It would give the Ladakhis an opportunity to interact with the outside world and vice versa. Ironical for the tourism ministry, Ladakh is more popular a tourist destination abroad than among domestic tourists. Hence boosting domestic tourism in Ladakh is top priority.

By launching the Sindhu Darshan in June the tourism season in Ladakh (July-September) gets another month of business, the opening of Leh-Manali road early the 2000, is a positive sign. All this brings more tourists, earns more revenue and more worldwide publicity,. It also creates more employment opportunities. But in making it a success, a major logistic hurdle-easy accessibility to 'Shangri La' – remains. More flights to Leh is the solution.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, has renewed India's earnest desire for friendship with Pakistan exuding

confidence that "our endeavours in this regard would succeed though it may take some time". In his address after performing Sindhu pujan and inaugurating the Sindhu Darshan festival - 2000 at Leh June 7, 2000 hoped that the "gushing Sindhu would carry the message of friendship to Pakistan and India need not reiterate its yearning for friendship as it merged from the core of our hearts". Wishing to see Sindhu in the cold desert region of Ladakh as a river of friendship he hoped its currents would carry the message of peace, brotherhood, cooperation and tranquility wherever it flows. Sindhu, symbolized the 5000-year-old ethos of the great Indian civilisation and its rediscovery would strengthen emotional integration in the country.

SOUTH ASIA'S ECONOMIC PROFILE

South Asia, was the most developed region of the world. It produced cotton 2000 years before anyone else. It traded with the entire world. There was never anything like poverty. Muslim rule, European conquest. Contributed to disrupt the ongoing developments. But they do not explain everything.

It is true, in the last over half a century, South Asia has made great progress. But the number of poor people has gone up by hundreds of millions. At the turn of the present century, South Asia had 515 million people living in absolute poverty. Of them, the majority lived in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. But India did progress. Its per capita GDP went up from 607 dollars to 1670 dollars (i.e. by 2.7 times) between 1960 and 1997, that of Pakistan by two times, Bangla by 1.6 times and Sri Lanka by 1.8 times. These gains are, however, modest.

South Asia has been one of the largest exporters of textiles and still is. Today, in the information age, India has emerged as a major exporter of computer software. Bangalore is the largest producer of software. India is also reservoir of scientific talent. A great market of 1300 million consumers, South Asia has an estimated middle class of 300 million with considerable purchasing power. It is unfortunate that this middle class continues to prefer foreign imported goods. Be that as it may, in spite of these advantages, south Asia remains backward.

Three countries dominate south Asia - India, Pakistan and Bangladesh - which together account for 95 percent of the population. Only India has been able to make steady progress. Pakistan, once a prosperous region, has declined. As for Bangladesh, it cannot be a viable state unless it can control its population. Failure in the working of democracy has led to ethnic discontent in most countries. This threatens their very future.

In Pakistan, Nepal and Bhutan, feudalism is still rampart. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, the challenges are from fundamentalism.

Information Age

Islamic societies perhaps are not ready to take advantage of the information age. More so, Pakistan. Its education is dominated by the fundamentalists. Fundamentalism, whether in social or economic beliefs, is as backward looking, harmful and irrational as fundamentalism in religion.

There was a time when land was the most important thing for a man. Then came labour. Still later, capital. We are living at a time when capital is giving way to information to societies based on knowledge. How much this is going to change our way of life, we cannot even imagine today. Obviously, the age of information is going to benefit only some societies, and not all. Everything depends on the tradition of knowledge and enquiry among a people.

India, which has a large Muslim population, has already made an impressive beginning in the field of information. Because knowledge had been one of the traditional ways for the salvation of man in Hindu life. Such a thing is foreign to all Semitic faiths. This explains why India is the home of so many religions, philosophies, literatures, etc., That tradition is not lost in India in spite of the exigencies of its history. This is why India was able to latch on so fast to the new information revolution. But not all are ready for the information age. For instance certain Muslim societies.

Islamic societies have been in two minds about knowledge. One builds a library; another destroys it. This is the tradition. Even

today, most of the madrassas teach only the Quran and nothing else. This is so in the madrassas, which train the Taliban and other fundamentalists. But then there are also modern universities in Muslim countries.

This dichotomy is at the bottom of the intellectual poverty of Muslim societies. It explains why the Muslims have not made a great contribution to the world of knowledge - particularly in science and philosophy.

The Muslims are a community of believers. The Umma (the community) is the guardian of the collective ideology. The individual does not enjoy the same status in Islam as in other civilisations. Islam sees the concept of democracy as a threat to the Umma, for it encourages individualism. It can also pose a challenge to the concept of Ijma (consensus), which is the basis of the Umma. Yousef M. Cheureiri in his book "Islamic Fundamentalism states" :

"Thus, three was no reference to other systems of thought, either for comparative purposes or for the introduction of new elements, and no recognition of the superiority of other cultures".

Not that others did not oppose these trends. Ibn al-Arabi exhorted Muslims to consider "all evidence in other faiths about God". And Farid din Al-Attar says that each one must find a way of his own according to his capacity clearly an Upanishadic thought. But these views never prevailed in Islam.

In the next fifty years, schools, colleges and universities will undergo complete change, as these institutions will no more be built around books. Computers, videos and satellite telecasts will change these institutions. This is a far cry from the concepts of the madrassa education.

The remedy lies in modern education. Muslims should free education from the madrassas and establish a tradition of free enquiry. This will not be easy. It will take a long time. And it will be fiercely resisted. But it has to be done. If, however, Muslims continue to succumb to the pressures of the mullahs they will fail to meet the challenges relating to poverty & hunger of the information age[35].

The Roman philosopher Seneca over 2000 years ago said: A hungry people listens not to reason nor care for justice, nor is bent by any prayers". Hunger in our country today is not related to the availability of food in the market but is caused by inadequate opportunities for sustainable livelihood resulting in insufficient purchasing power. Since a famine of purchasing power is responsible for the famine of food at the household level, food security is best expressed in terms of million person-years of jobs, rather than in million tonnes of foodgrains.

From the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, technology has been a major source of economic inequity among nations and among communities within nations. Our national strength in biotechnology opens the door to the conversion of our rich bio-resources into economic wealth, in a manner, which is meaningful to the poor. Therefore, if technology has been a cause of economic and social inequity in the past, we now have an opportunity for enlisting technology as an ally in the movement for social, gender, and economic equity. Modern information technology provides this opportunity. Knowledge and skill empowerment can now be achieved at a fast pace, if we shift our approach from patronage to one of genuine partnership with the poor in the design and operation of rural knowledge centres.

A hunger-free South Asia has been greatly influenced by the concept, "the test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have little". Translated into action, this has meant concentration on improving the productivity of small farm holdings and the well-being of the economically and socially under-privileged women and men who toil day and night and in sun and rain to produce food for their fellow human beings.

Hunger and deprivation can be substantially reduced by August 15, 2007, which marks the 60th anniversary of our independence, provided we launch a community led and controlled food and water security system with the help of Gram Sabhas and elected local bodies[36].

Power is concentrated in a few hands in almost all countries. The introduction of panchayat and empowerment of women are expected to distribute power on a wider scale. South Asia can

make some claims to modest economic successes. Life expectancy has gone up in the region, particularly in India and Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka and Maldives have much to show in social gains. With the literacy levels at 90 percent, these countries are on par with countries like South Korea and Taiwan. But without rapid economic growth, unemployment has become a major problem.

The education level in Nepal and Bhutan is dismal, well below the average of developing countries. As for Medicare, it is totally inadequate in most of the countries. Lack of social development has led to poor human development. All these countries are way down in the international scale.

India has been relatively successful in poverty reduction. The same cannot be said of others. In fact, poverty has grown in South Asia since the 1980s. Poverty is one of the principal causes for environmental degradation throughout South Asia. One aggravates the other, and has thus become a vicious cycle. Rural poverty has driven millions into urban centres, where they fester in slums.

Today these slums breed not only diseases and unhealthy environment, but also criminals. Most of the cities are unable to carry out waste disposal. The slums have, however, become vote banks of parties and politicians. Strange, they try to preserve the slums as they are. Unfortunately, South Asia happens to be one of the worst governed areas of the world. A greedy ruling class eager to make its millions and occupy the top rungs of society, is ready to resort to even criminal methods. For this, they have lined up with the criminals.

The short-cut to wealth has created great income disparities perhaps, it is the worst in the world. If the economic performance of the region is poor, it is because there is no unity of purpose. South Asia continues to be largely agricultural. In Nepal and Bhutan more than 90 percent of the people are engaged in it, about 65 per cent in India and about 55 percent in Pakistan. Only in Sri Lanka, the figure is less than 50 percent.

Obviously, industrialization has been very slow for various reasons. Perhaps for want of resources, skills, technology etc., that

is way regional cooperation could have helped each country to achieve a measure of industrialization. For want of this, unemployment has grown rapidly. Agriculture is no more in a position to absorb surplus labour. Exploitation of the Himalayan waters, of the hydropower potential of Bhutan and Nepal, of the gas resources of Bangladesh and energy resources of Pakistan could change the economic profile of South Asia. There are other areas where South Asia must cooperate[37].

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, in an article "Pakistan's Options", emphasises that if Pakistan is to stand shoulder to shoulder on the world state with developed nations it must see that its options are not - as would appear at first sight - between military and democratic rule, but between remaining in its present state of impasse or extricating itself from it. As in any other nation, there have been moments in its history when national progress has come to a standstill. In the case of Pakistan, the need of the hour is for bold decision-making to restart it on its onward journey. But since revolutionary ideas often clash with public sentiment, it will take the clout of a military ruler rather than the persuasion of a democratically elected leader to push them through.

A classic example is that of Charles de Gaulle, a general in the French army, who rose to the position of President by seizing political power at a crucial juncture in the nation's history. Condemned by some as an undemocratic act, this led, in fact, to France's salvation. An elected ruler could never have acted so independently of public sentiment as to take the realistic and intrepid path chosen by de Gaulle, namely the unconditional de-colonies, in particular Algeria, which was exactly what France needed to elevate it from being the "sick man" of Europe to a front-ranking world power. A democratic leader would have let his nation stagnate, politically and economically, rather than imperil his own popularity.

The present situation in Pakistan some what resembles the pre-de Gaulle days in France. Indecisiveness at the political level or wrong decision-making has allowed the state of undeclared war by Pakistan on the question of Kashmir to drag on for so long that it has ruinously undermined Pakistan's own interests. The world now looks upon Pakistan as an unsafe country, and world

monetary organisations are unwilling to invest in it. Public unrest has produced a civil war-like situation, and religious, educational and cultural organisations, in becoming centres of destructive activities, have lost all moral and rational orientation. With only its "hate India" policy to bring about internal unity, it has certainly fallen in global esteem.

The worst consequence of these evils is the brain drain. Individuals from all walks of life naturally aim to better their prospects by going to Western countries, when all their own country can offer is instability, a constant threat of war, poor or non-existent infrastructure, meagre rewards for hard work and scant opportunities to develop human potential. If Pakistan could offer peace, stability and a reasonable degree of prosperity the entire country would be well on its way to progress. But while emphasis continues to be laid exclusively upon making a "change in the status quo" vis a vis Kashmir, the emergency like situation is bound to continue.

The unrealistic policy of Pakistan regarding Kashmir - one tenaciously clung to for over half a century - has not only proved infructuous, but has also served as a barrier to the rising tide of global progress, leaving the country lagging far behind other nations. There is only one way out: Pakistan should seduously adopt the policy of availing of opportunities for its own internal advancement rather than persist in tackling extraneous problems head-on.

Practical course at present for Pakistani leaders would be to accept the status quo in Kashmir, both geographically and politically. Islam itself advises that when the ideal is unattainable, "reconciliation is the best"[38]. (Quran)

One really bold step in the direction of reconciliation by Pakistan would bring the state of undeclared war between India and Pakistan to an end. The ensuing peace would open the doors to bilateral commerce and mutually beneficial exchanges in the fields of education, culture and tourism. Given the pre-existing cultural similarities between the two countries, this could bring the two neighbours as close to each other in brotherly feeling as they are in geographical location.

ANAL HAQ - AHAM BRAHMO ASMI

The various religious creeds strived for universality as is quite evident in Sufism. Sufism is the science to transform the world into God. Sufism is not simply a philosophy, it is a science. It does not believe in speculation. It believes in experience. Sufism does not trust in beliefs. It wants you to drop all kinds of beliefs because they will be the barriers to knowing. All your beliefs have to be taken away from you. You have to be left in ignorance and innocence. Only from there experimentation is possible. Sufism believes in experiment, in experience; it does not believe in beliefs. It trusts only the truth that is already there[39].

The revolution was created by Hazrat Mansoor. He was humiliated, made to ride a donkey through the streets and finally hanged and his corpse burnt. His fault - Anal Haq (I am truth, God). The Upanishads considered man as a divine being, a manifestation of the divine reality. They are replete with expressions like 'So' ahm' (I am that), 'Aham Brahmosmi (I am the Brahman), 'Tat twamasi' (Thou art that) etc.

However, in deep humiliation Hazrat Mansoor addressed to people "Forget no God to see my plight, Trust in Him. He is with me like a friend. He gives me a cup which he took first Himself".

The enlightenment personality is a no-mind personality, living, but without any conceptions; doing, but not thinking about it; loving, but without the concept of love; breathing, but without any meditation. So living will be moment to moment and one with the total, but mind will not be there in between. The mind divides, and now there will be no division. However, for achievement of such a stage, scriptures will not do.

Tear the prayer mat, break rosary, throw books in water.
Thou hold angles' hand, be known as their slave[40].

–Hazrat Mansoor

Any guru will do. And gurus have always been against the scriptures, although the scriptures talk about gurus and praise gurus. The very concept of the guru is in opposition to the

scriptures. The well known proverb *Guru bin gnana nahee* - without the guru there will be no knowledge. It means that with only the scriptures there is no knowledge.

A living guru is needed, not a dead book. A book cannot know what type of individual you are. A book is always generalized, it cannot be particular; that is impossible, the very possibility is not there. Only a living person can be aware of your needs, of things which are going to happen to you.

This is really very paradoxical: scriptures talk about gurus - *Guru bin jnana nahee,* no knowledge without the guru - but gurus are symbolically against scriptures. The very concept that the guru will give you knowledge does not mean that he will provide knowledge. Rather, it means that only a living person can be of any help.

Books are meant for no one in particular, they are meant for everyone. And when a method is to be given, your individuality has to be taken into account very exactly, scientifically. This knowledge that the guru has to transfer has always been transferred secretly, privately, from guru to disciple.

The one great key to the knowledge of the absolute Brahman.

Resting in Brahman, with steady intellect and undeluded, the knower of Brahman neither rejoices on obtaining what is pleasant, nor grieves on obtaining what is unpleasant[41].

A steady intellect from which all delusions have dropped becomes the instrument for "knowing Brahman" – and the "one who knows Brahman becomes Brahman", and therefore, comes to live "established in the Brahmic consciousness of infinite beatitude", a living God-man walking upon the earth that is Olympus to him.

With the self-detached to external contacts, he finds happiness in the self; with the self-engaged in the meditation of Brahman, he attains endless happiness[42].

The one who has gained complete detachment from the external objects, realises the bliss that is the nature of the self. Though the process of self-development is essentially a process

of detachment, this technique of negation does not take us to an empty and purposeless zero, but when we have negated all that is false, we come to experience and live a total positivity. When the dreamer has renounced all his contacts with the dream world and thrown away his dream personality, he does not become a non-entity, but he re-discovers himself to be the more vital, the more effective personality, the waken one.

Similarly, whenever contacts with the external world through the media of the body, the mind and the intellect are clipped off clean, we awaken in the meadows of god-consciousness and come to live the joy that is the eternal nature of the self. A seeker having thus redeemed his own mind and intellect from their preoccupations with the external world, at least during his meditation, when he comes to keep his heart devoted to the meditation of Brahman, attains imperishable happiness in life.

Life is a continuous drama embracing the beginnings of existence and its end. The light suffers and struggles to overcome the darkness in which evil cloaks itself. The realisation of Brahman is the end of man, since it destroys all evils, avidya, etc., all the seeds of rebirth. Therefore, Brahman is what is to be known[43].

HIMALAYAS

The watershed of many rivers lies not among the high peaks but on the Tibetan beyond. It is highly interesting that the rivers such as Arum, being older than the mountains, has to keep their channels open during the uplift and in the process created gigantic barrier that slice through the main Himalayan chain. The Himalayan system, in turn, has camcacus, and Alps, creating a network of peaks spiralling from Europe across the Middle East to China and Russia[44].

The entire Himalaya belt is a great snow range of mountain constituting a gigantic barrier. It separates the tropical India highlands from the Tibetan plateau of central Asia. In a broader geological sense, the Himalaya encompasses not only the great Himalayan chain, but also adjoining and connected ranges- the Karakoram, Hindu Kush, Sulaimam and other, all of which were formed during the upheavals in the Tertiary era. The present belief as such entails that the Himalaya extends from upper Burma-Myanmar in the east to Baluchistan and Afghanistan in the

West (approximately between longitude 72 & 91 east and latitude 27 & 36 north). The mighty Himalaya sprawls across seven nations, more than a dozen races and languages, over a hundred tribes with different dialects and diverse climatic patterns of habitats. In width, it varies from 80 km to more 300 km from north-east to north- west with a mean elevation of the central easier; range of 600 m. The deepest zone extends to 700 km and may be less then 500km thick[45].

According to Crib Echelon 'the Himalayan arc' forms an ecological Gibraltar whose fate looms over the well-being of about 50 million people in the mountains and about another 300 million in the Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra valley system. Ecologically, the high-altitude zones constitute a special world, with their own climatic complex of semi-attenuated harsh atmosphere, low Area temperature, high atmosphere\aridity, making a sharp contrast between the microclimate and the macroclimate. The Himalaya-the greatest housecat feature on earth- is climatologically one of its least known areas[46]. The Himalayan high- altitude physical features are remarkable in influencing and modifying the climate and negotiation not only of India, but also of the entire middle Asia.

KASHYAPA

The Persian chroniclers also refer to similar accounts relating to the origin of the valley. Baharistan-i-Shahi, an anonymous source-material (1614-25), states that Kashmir remained submerged in water for two thousand years. In the neighbourhood, there dwelt a married hermit Kash from India. He made supplication to God for a piece of dry land where he could pray and carry out a living. One can infer from it that there existed a lake water. The author maintains that God granted his request and sent down three angels with the command that the water be drained out and the land dried up, making as much of it available to the hermit as was required by him. The angels carried out the orders and the dry land so formed was named after the sage Kashyapa.

SATISAR

In a Persian chronicle, the writer maintains that in early days the low plains of Kashmir were originally a deep lake

between high mountains. Its water was pure and plentiful. The snow on the top of mountains. Its water was pure and plentiful. The snow on the top of mountains melted and formed a lake below. There was no outlet because of high mountainous barriers. Regarding the outlet of the lake water he repeats the story that Mata Sati meaning Parvati, representing the full strength (Shakti) of Mahadeva, appeared on the scene and came out in a boat for a pleasure trip from her abode of Harmukh peak in Lar valley right upto Kaunsarnag to the west of Banihal pass. She named this vast lake as Sati Sar, meaning thereby the 'lake of Sati' (in Sanskrit Sar means a lake). Then he refers to the struggle saint Kashyapa had with the lake demon Jalodbhava (waterborn) who was finally killed by the gods. After the demon's death, the water was drained out and the land so formed was called 'Kashyapa Mar', which later on came to be known as 'Kashmir'. He also makes a fanciful observation that in those days people lived on the peaks of mountains and roamed from one end to another in boats, which were tied to moorings.

NAU BANDHAN

These moorings, according to Hassan Kashmir could be seen on the peaks of Harmuksh, Kaunsarnag and many other places. The sailors bored holes in the stones and tied their boats firmly to them. He mentions a place where such a process of tightening the boats was in operation as 'Naubandhan' a known sacred place. The origin of the name of the place, he stresses, is traceable to this process. Explaining the word, he says that in Sanskrit 'Nau' means boat and 'Bandhan' means to tie. Hence the place is known as 'Naubandhan'.

In support of his assertion, he mentions the existence of some mortars, which had become clean and smooth because of excessive use by the people who lived on these mountains. On these bases, he upholds the view that the water level of the lake rose to that height. Concluding his story he says that God alone knows the actual truth about the origin of the valley. Other Persian chroniclers in their works have reiterated more or less the same version regarding the origin of the land consequent upon the drainage of the lake water. Notable among them are Hajji Mohi-ud-din Miskin[47], Hargopal Kaul, Haider Malik Chadura, Pandit

Narayana Kaul, Khawaja Muhammad Azam Diddamari, and Dewan Kirpa Ram.

NAU BANDHAN TIRTHA

There are a few devotional texts besides the accounts given by numerous Mahatmyas, which give the student of history valuable information on various tirthas, springs (Nagas), mountains, rivers, and provide other geographical and topographical details. Sahibrama (a 19th century Pandit scholar from Srinagar) gives a detailed account of all the sacred places in his work entitled Kashmirtirthasamgraha. So also Mahatmyas were composed by Pandits incharge of each of the Tirthas for the benefit of devotees. Though not very old, they still point out to the earlier accounts of the valley with particular reference to the Tirthas and their lords in praise of whom they were composed. For instance Naubandhanmahatmya among other legends refers to three high snowy peaks towards the west of Banihal pass which the composer traditionally looks upon as personifications of Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu. Ignoring the command of these divinities to come out of the lake, the demon Jalodbhava, who was invisible, did not stir out. Then Balabhadra, the brother of Vishnu, struck the mountain with his own weapon the ploughshare. The water flowed down and the lake became dry. Then Vishnu in a fierce fight killed the demon.

Kaunsarnag (ancient Kramasaras) below the Naubandhan Tirtha is still an object of worship, since markings of footsteps on a rock here are regarded as those of Vishnu (Vishnu pad) which were said to have been left by him while killing the demon.

HARI PARBAT

In an another such literary reference of Dsharikapariccheda, a Mahatmya in praise of Sharika Goddess and the hill near Srinagar, an interesting story is mentioned regarding the lake and its drainage process. It states that waterborn demon Jalodbhava brought havoc tc people residing on the periphery of the lake. The gods then implored Mata Sati- the consort of Lord Shiva, to deliver the land and the people from the oppression of the demon. Moved by their imploration, she took the form of a Sharika bird

(Maina in Sans. And Haer in Kashmiri). She took a pebble in her beak and dropped it over the spot where the demon stayed. The pebble grew into a gigantic hill and the demon got crushed under its weight. This very hill is known as Sharika hill after Goddess Sharika, popularly called 'Hari Parbat' after Kashmiri 'Haer'. On the north-west side of the hill, natural markings on the rock form the mystical diagram known as Srichakra which has continued to be an object of worship. This hill is also known as 'Pradyumna Petha' or the seat of Pradyumna, being connected with the love story of his son, Aniruddha and Usha[48].

Whatever the genuineness of the legend, the place is revered even now as the seat of the gods who have taken their abode over the hill in gratitude to Sharika- a form of Goddess Durga. These legends, in uniform or multiform versions, indicate that a vast lake, which is now confirmed by nearly every traveller to Kashmir, occupied the vale. On the basis of scientific observations Frederic Drew, while advocating this thesis writes, The traditions of the natives traditions that can be historically traced as having existed for ages tend in the same direction, and these have usually been considered to corroborate the conclusions drawn from the observed phenomena[49].

Swami Rama says:

"The mountain cacti bloom suddenly in the moonlit night. They are shy to the sun's rays, and before the sun rises their petals withdraw their blooming beauty, never to bloom again. More than twenty-five varieties of succulents and cacti in the Himalayas which are used for medicinal purposes.

The king of all the Himalayan flowers is the *himkamal*, or "snow lotus", a very rare flower. One day as I was wandering through the mountains I saw a single blue *himkamal* as big as a saucer, growing from between two rocks and half-buried in snow. Its fragrance radiates everywhere and the purpose of its life is fulfilled".

Rishivae

"All phenomena (dhammas) are without Self"; when one sees this with Insight-wisdom, one becomes weary of dukkha (i.e., the khandhas). This is the Path to purity[50].

–Dhammapada verse (279)

'All forms are unreal', he who knows and sees this becomes passive in pain; this is the way that leads to purity[51].

Anatta a Pali word and anatman a Sanskrit word means, "no soul". The Buddhist teaching is that there is no permanent soul or self within the Skandhas that transmigrates at death to another body.

Anatman is one of the three marks of existence preached in Buddha's second sermon and literally meaning "not-self". The Brahmanical tradition at the time of Buddha maintained that each sentient being possessed a self atman which was pure, subtle, to the next. Buddha attacked this notion in two ways. First, he emphasized non-attachment as a key factor in his teaching, thus eliminating the urgency of clinging to the supposed atman. Second, he suggested that the concept was illogical and argued that something pure, subtle, and eternal like the atman could not associate with something impure, gross, and impermanent like the body. The above does not mean to suggest that Buddha preached annihilation of the individual at death. Rather, like other Indian traditions of the time, he maintained that rebirth took place and karma was transmitted from life to life. The resolution of precisely what is transmitted and how the remains unclear. The issue became one of the critical areas explored by the developing Abhidharma or "Higher Philosophy" traditions in Buddhism.

One theory, for example, suggests that factors known as "mental constituents" (pratisandhi-vijnana) and that rebirth occurs in a "steam" (santana). This is dangerously close to positing rebirth consciousness as a pseudo-self, simply titled differently. Additionally, "stream" is only an ordinary language metaphor utilized to accommodate discussion about the self. Equally, the problem is not solved in the famous text known as the Milindapanha in which the clever monk Nagasena advises King Menander that rebirth occurs just as a flame passes from one lamp to another. Later Buddhist sects, like the Pudgalavadins postulated other ideas about the process of rebirth, which were generally considered and refuted, but the problem has never been satisfactorily resolved either by the Hinayana or Mahayana sects. Thus, the "self in Buddhism can be considered to be nothing more than an

impermanent, changing personality comprised of the five aggregates (skandhas).

The individual passes through a series of phases, which have no essential reality of their won. Our life is an in constant process, ever changing and never stopping to be. We are not entities but processes. Anyone who has seen things as causally determined processes will not attach permanent value to his individuality. Life in the world of time and space is a condition of incessant change. Plato asks: 'How can that which is never in the same state be anything'? If we lose our individuality, if we break down the barrier of selfishness, the cosmic process pursues its normal course[52].

The sage Yajnavalkya, while teaching King Janaka the secret of enlightenment, tells him that the path of liberation is hard and long; the Prashna Upanishad says that the soul has to travel on two paths after death, the southern and the northern: the jivatman has to keep on travelling throughout life and after death to reach the Parmatman.

According to the Chandogya Upanishad, continence is central to the realisation of Brahman. Not only that. It says salvation itself is continence, because it delivers a man from ignorance. Though continence, man realises the Self: "What people call dwelling in the forest, that is really continence".

The first, and for some considerable time one may say the ruling, though which vividly dominates an infant child's consciousness is the awareness of "I". The last thought which moves with the spirit of the tenement of the brain at death is also that of "I". During the intervening years between these two points of birth and death years which make up that composite picture of commonplace events, unrehearsed comedies, occasional tragedies, brief sunshine and lingering shadows that we call life - the chief preoccupation of most human beings is with that same "I".

Strange as it may be seen, this "I" is shrouded in mystery, rooted in obscurity and more ignorant of itself than of anything else in the world around it. Yet man is not naturally conscious

of this ignorance; such consciousness comes to him only when he starts to become curious about his sense of identity and to think about himself.

RAJ TARANGNI WITH INTERPRETATIONS

The English version of Rajtarangani with interpretations was published in 1900. While this translation work was in progress, Stein also began work on Ancient Geography of Kashmir. He co-authored Ancient Geography of Kashmir with Govind Koul in 1896. The western scholars who visited Kashmir included J.Ph. Vogal, Dutch. He came in 1900 to study archaeological sites, particularly the ancient temples in Kashmir. On Dr. Aurel Stein's request, Prof. Nityanand Shastri assisted Vogal. Vogal greatly appreciated Prof. Nityanand Shastri's services: "Pt. Nityanand was recommended to me by Dr. Aurel Stein (who) better than anyone else knew the learned class of Kashmir". Vogal worked on Chamba rock inscription along with Pt. Nityanand. And under the title "Antiquite of Chamba", Himachal Pradesh, a book was published in 1913.

The relationship of Kashmiri scholars with western scholars began in 1875 when George Bhuler, a German scholar, visited Kashmir during Maharaja Ranbir Singh's regime. In three months of his stay, he was able to collect 300 manuscripts. Most of them were written on birch bark. The ties between the Kashmiri and Western scholars grew with the visit of Stein. He visited in 1888, 13 years after his guide George Bhuler, who worked in Tuinbegn University at Vienna, visited the valley[53].

The origin of the vale of Kashmir, according to popular legend, was a vast mountain lake called Satisar, the lake of Sati, and geologists confirm this. There is a tradition that its drainer was an ascetic, named kashyapa, hence the reclaimed land was called Kashyapmar, which later became Kashmir. The mountains, which surround Kashmir, are varied in form and colour. Kashmir is renowned for its lakes, rivers and abundant flora and fauna.

According to Kalhana's Rajtarangini, the oldest Sanskrit Chronicle, after the Valley was drained out, Brahmins were brought there by Kashyapa Rishi who were philosophers engrossed in the pursuit of knowledge and practising the lives of purity. These Brahmins, popularly called Kashmiri Pandits, form a distinct

class of their own and were considered to be the perfect specimen of the ancient Aryan settlers in the Valley[54].

Stein succeeded in his mission - to trace the original manuscripts of Rajtarangani. Stein's visit paved the way for other western Indologist, to visit Kashmir and study its language, literature and history. Eminent Canadian Indologist A. W. Strawton visited Kashmir in 1900. He took keen interest in Kashmiri texts and in this context corresponded with many Kashmiri scholars. He, however, died two years after his visit. The letters exchanged between Strawton and Kashmiri scholars in Sanskrit language fascinated Strawton's widow Anna Booth. She complied the letters and published a book titled **Letters From India** in 1908 from England and the USA.

Again in 1923, Stein helped German scholar Maurice Winterniatz with his work on Indian literature and Kashmiri Mahabaharata traditions. On Stein's recommendation, Winternitz took the assistance of Prof. Nityananda Shastri. Fond of the Kashmiri language, Stein learnt to speak it from Pt. Kashi Ram. To test his understanding of the language, Stein heard folk stories. He translated Hatim Tilwoin into German and published it from Europe under the title "Hatims Tales". He also published it in Kashmiri, using the Roman script in 1917. When his work was published, Stein observed:

"Had the able assistance of Pt. Govind Koul not been assured to me from the very beginning, I would have never considered to undertake the task".

Stein passed on the record of these folk stories to George Grierson in 1910 for a linguist assessment[55].

FOLKLORE

Folklore of the Kashmir Valley has its own pattern of folklore, distinct from the others. It gets interpreted in folk-tales and folk–songs, dance and drama, fairs, festivals and customs, superstitions, proverbs, riddles, myths as well as folk arts. Literally folklore is nourished by the masses, and in turn, is nourishes them.

An unknown folk bard starts the vogue of folk-songs, compiling in tune, content and effect. Similar is the impact of other

forms of folk expression, like the folk-tales, of which all the regions have an inexhaustible fund. Folk operas and ballads have spontaneity and mirth. They have assumed immortality.

Folk-songs present considerable variety in theme, content and form. The love-lorn pour out their hearts in songs. The boatmen sing to the rhythm of paddling boats. Songs are sung to herald the bounties of nature. The village holymen sing semi-mystic songs. Grandmothers sing lullabies and cradle songs to put grand children to bed thus:

> I rock thee, my ear-ring, I rock thee,
> Thou are the God of Love at evening,
> And the sun early morning,
> I rock thee, my ear-ring, I rock thee.

Wedding songs are full of mirth, even boisterous sometimes. Vanun, the wedding songs, sung by women, provide a difference in diction among different communities. The rustic muse in befitting terms sings the beauty of the bride:

> Our belle is robed in muslin,
> O maid, who has dressed you?
> Your teeth are so many pearls,
> Who has delivered them from the sea,
> O lovely maid.

Women appeal to the gods to bless their newly-weds. The plea, by all communities, is to the bridegroom to cherish their beloved daughter.

Folk-songs are related to certain occupations. The village folk sing lilting songs while planting paddy saplings. The Weavers and embroiderers sing songs with unusual gusto while their deft and nimble fingers work on Pashmina shawls. The rural women hum songs while spinning yarn, thus:

> On my mat, in my home, is perched my spinning wheel,
> I wheel it and weave threads out of it.

The Pampore fields grow an unusual flower, the Saffron, so well-known in song and legend. While picturing the beauty and fragrance of the saffron flower, peasants go ecstatic:

Towards Pampore went away my darling,
Saffron flowers caught him in fragrant entrance, He is there, and ah me! I am here,
When? Where? Allah! Would I see his face!

There is also a rich variety of pastoral songs - simple and chaste. These acquire a singular charm when sung in chorus by villagers, during the sapling season - when nature is replete with fresh beauty - and, harvesting season, when their surroundings are bountiful. These songs are fresh and lucid and outstandingly rich in rhythm and vitality. These are rich in diction, content and tone that differentiates them from the urban product. Each form is suited to its theme.

Romantic ballads, originally sung by the peasantry, and passed on by word of mouth, continue to have universal appeal among the masses. A typical one runs thus:

Maddened by bewitching Shirin,
Khusroo went to batter the mountain,
To whom did this world prove faithful?
Alas! Who killed your, you lost one?

The legendary lovers, Himal and Nagraya, are recalled in wedding songs thus:

Nagraya will take his seat on the golden carpet,
And take away Himal in the jewelled palanquin

The predominant theme of folksongs is varied moods of love. A woman's touching complaint about her strayed lover, who has deserted her, goes thus.

You must tell me,
Where my boy has gone?
Is he a fountain in life's garden?
Or, a well of nectar, sweet and delicious?

Rauf dance-and-song is delightful to watch and hear. Tender-footed maidens in rhythmic movement and interlinked arms dance it.

Kashmir has an inexhaustible fund of folk-tales. Himal and Nagaraya, Zohra Khatun and Haya Band are distinctly Kashmiri

in origin. The prose of folk-tales is picturesque and colloquial. An old peasant narrates folk tales, often interspersed with fragments of narrative poetry, making the tale effective and spell-binding.

Delightful replicas of Shabrang - Prince-thief of Kashmir are to be found in Norse, Dravidian and Chinese tales. Hilarious stories of thieves, like Laiq Tsur and his famous 'pupil' Mahadev Bishta-the Robin Hood of Kashmir - are current in villages and urban homes of Kashmir.

KASHMIRI DICTIONARY

Knowing the significance of Kashmiri language, George Grierson decided to compile a dictionary in the language. Grierson received Stein's help again for this project. Pt. Govind Koul was requested to assist Grierson in this task. As the work on the dictionary began, Govind Koul died in 1899 at the age of 49. Stein then endorsed the name Pt. Mukand Ram He worked on this project for 22 years till he passed away in 1921 (at the age of 68). The dictionary, however, still remained incomplete. Grierson then took the assistance of Proof Nityananda Shastri for 11 years to complete it. Finally, the dictionary was published in 1932. Commenting on the help rendered by Pt. Mukand Ram Shastri and Prof. Nityanand Shastri in compiling the dictionary, Grierson said:

"Pt. Mukand Ram Shastri laboured with me on this task for more than 20 years and often came to hot plains of Bihar, far away from his home in snow and mountains, and did not live to see the completed sheets of work on which he spent fruitful years of his scholarship. I also owe a heavy debt of gratitude to Prof. Nityananda Shastri of Partap Singh College, Srinagar, who after the death of assistant Pt. Mukand Ram Shastri placed all his great learning at my disposal and helped me in Kashmiri idioms and phrases that had baffled my unaided knowledge. He translated and wrote a commentary of an ancient Kashmiri work Mahanaya Prakasha (written in 14th century) from which I elucidated the history of Kashmiri language".

KANJUR & TANGYUR

Kashmiri scholars' sincerity towards their work was unquestionable when English scholar Pope Ved requested Pt.

Mukand Ram Shastri to help him in Tibetan studies in 1908, the latter did not know Tibetan. He first learnt Tibetan language for more than a year from a Tibetan lama before assisting Pope Ved. What followed was the translation of Tibetan treatise Kanjur Tangyur into Sanskrit.

Kanjur Literally means "Translation of Buddha-Word"; that portion of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon containing what is thought to be Buddha's authoritative teaching[65]. Tangyur, The second section of the Tibetan scriptures; a collection of the works of Indian and Tibetan scholars.

It comprised 1, 50, 000 shlokas. For this work, Pt. Mukand Ram Shastri earned a cash award of Rs. 500 from Maharaja Partap Singh.

KASHMIRI CULTURE POPULARISED

Pt. Mukand Ram Shastri also helped the Morovian missionary, Dr. A.H. Franckie, in deciphering the Ladakshi inscription in Drass. Norwegian linguist Stein Konow took assistance of Prof. Nityananda Shastri in deciphering many linguist and epigraphical works of Kashmir. Between 1920-1930, George Grierson edited and translated many Kashmiri works like Krishna Avatar Lila and Kashmiri Ramayana (with the help of Prof. Nityanand Shastri). Pt. Mukand Ram Shastris' commentary Shiv Parinaya was edited by Grierson and published in six volumes by the Royal Asiatic society Bengal, Calcutta, between 1914-1922.

If Western scholars earned titles, they acknowledged the work put in by the Kashmiri scholars as well. The order of merit was conferred on Grierson in 1928. Acknowledging many messages of felicitation that came to him from all over the world, he paid a tribute to kashmiri scholars. He wrote to Prof. Nityananda: "I am indeed happy to receive the title of OM. However, my happiness is increased by knowledge that competent scholars like you who can judge consider that it has been deserved".

A similar type of tribute, Stein paid to Pt. Govind Koul when Knighthood was conferred on him on October 12, 1912. "The first sure and certain steps on this road of name and fame were taken with the help of Pt. Govind Koul". On December 14,

1912, Pt. Mukand Ram Shastri was also presented the title of Mahamohopadhyaya by Lord Hardinge of Penshurst, the Viceroy. If knighthood gave Stein the honour to sit beside the Viceroy, the title of Mahamohopadhyaya gave Pt. Mukand Ram Shastri the privilege to sit next to the Maharaja of Kashmir.

With this coordination between the scholars, the ancient history and culture of Kashmir was popularised the world over. Sanskrit spread in the USA when a Sanskrit scholar, Dr. Brained Spooner, visited Kashmir in 1905 and came in contact with Kashmiri scholars Pt. Mukand Ram Shastri, Prof. Nityanand Shastri, Harbhat and others. The teaching of Sanskrit first began at Yale University under Professor Salisbury. Later, Prof. Nityananda wrote a four-volume commentary on Taitaraya Upanishad for Spooner in 1930. The earnest efforts of the Kashmiri scholars are being realized now. As tribute to them, a team of scholars founded the Nityanand Shastri Kashmiri Research Institute in Delhi in 1996[55], with a view to have deep studies in Kashmiri literature and to spread Kashmiri culture.

Ladakh, The Country of Mountain Passes

The etymological meaning of the word Ladakh is derived from La meaning mountain passes and Dak meaning country, i.e. the country of mountain passes. Ladakh was originally inhabited by a tribe With the passage of time, the various influences like the mental make-up of the north Indians, the finer feelings of Baltistan and the Mongols of Central Asia have greatly changed their life style. Even the name of this country has undergone a sea change with more or less every century i.e., in the 7th century it was called Ma-Lo-Pho (according to Hiuen Tsang) or Lal-Bhumi; Kanchapa meaning land of snow; Ripul i.e., the country of mountains and finally Ladakh.

Ladakh (La dvags) is the remotest, highest and largest district of Jammu & Kashmir (India). Today Ladakh suffers, from severed relations with the Tibetan interlocutor. At the present historical juncture, Tibetan culture is threatened extinction as a consequence of the destruction and looting of its artistic and architectural inheritance. It is a demolition that continues, for instance through the so-called "Lhasa Valley Development Project

1980-2000", an operation that implies the complete disappearance of the historical centres the Barkhor and Shol areas – of the unique holy city of Lhasa. Therefore Ladakh remains one of the last living jewels of the ancient and precious Tibetan Buddhish cultural heritage[56].

At one time, Ladakh was almost wholly Buddhist but now Kargil area is Muslim dominated. According to 1981 Census, there are 69706 Buddhists out of which 64,944 live in the villages and the remaining 4,962 in the towns. Thus, Buddhism in Ladakh is largely village based. The most important monasteries or gompas in Ladakh are:

The Lakhang monastery at Leh;
Sankar gompa, just 3 km from Leh;
Hemis gompa, the largest and the most sacred monastery, 45 km from Leh, on the Ladakh-Tibet road; and
Thiksey and Shey gompas, on the way to Hemis gompa.

The monastery of Lama-Yuru, 96 km from Leh on the Leh-Kargil Road, and the Alchi monastery, beyond Lama-Yuru, and about 10 km off the highway other important monasteries in Ladakh are: Likir Spituk, Nimaun, Skara, Phiong, Stana, Saspal, Rizong, Chimrey, Mathoo and Sakte.

Because of its proximity to Tibet, and consequently more frequent contacts with Tibet than with India, Ladakh follows the Tibetan from of Buddhism, which is also called lamaism. As in Tibet, all the four sects of Lamas are prevalent in Ladakh. These are: Nying-ma-pa, Kar-gyu-pa, Saskya-pa and Ge-lug-pa. Besides the Gompas, which dot the whole of Ladakh, there is always a chorten at the entrance of every village. The famous Mahayana mantra '*Om Mani Padme Hum*' (Hail thou the possessor of Jewel Lotus) is almost continuously recited by the devout Buddhists. It is often written on a piece of cloth or inscribed on a stone and left on the spot where it is pronounced by the devotee. Such monuments are called Mani walls and can be seen every where near the villages, on tops of passes, near fords and on the banks or rivers. Though the religion followed by the Ladakhi people is more ritualistic but its impact on the lives of the people has been very wholesome. By nature, the ladakhis are honest, kind, courteous and hospitable.

Mahapandit Rahul Sankrityayan, the great Buddhist scholar and explorer, visited Ladakh in June-July 1933. He was so much overwhelmed by the courtesy and kindness of his hosts that while staying at Leh, he wrote three booklets in Tibetan for the benefit of the ladakhi children. In his travelogue on his visit to Ladakh 'Meri Ladakh Yatra', he speaks very highly of the devotion of the Ladakhi people to Buddhism[57].

The most striking feature in the physical aspect of Ladakh is the parallelism of its mountain ranges, which stretch through the country from South-East to North-West. This general direction of the mountain chains determines the courses of the rivers as well as the boundaries of the natural divisions of the country. The general aspect of Ladakh is extreme barrenness. Seen from above, the country would appear a mere accession of yellow plains and barren mountains capped with snow, and the lakes of Pangkong and Tshomo Riri would seem like bright cases amidst a vast desert of rock and sand. No trace of man nor of human habitations would meet the eye: and even the large spots of cultivated land would be but small specks on the mighty waste of deserted world. But a closer view would show many fertile tracts along the rivers, covered with luxuriant crops, and many picturesque monasteries. From which the chant of human voices ascends on high in daily prayer and praise. The territory of Ladakh is one of the most elevated regions on the earth. Its different valleys lie along the head-waters of the Indus, the Setluj, and the Chenab; and the joint effects of elevation and of isolation amidst snowy mountains produce perhaps the most singular climate in the snow world[58]. Burning heat by day is succeeded by piercing cold at night, and everything is parched by the extreme dryness of the air. The Ladakh region is vast, strategically important but poor. It is situated on the Tibetan –Chinese border and has a small population – about 69, 000. The demand for an autonomous structure for the district of Leh was mainly inspired by the regional aspirations for all-round development.

Ladakh, which is nearly six times the size of the Kashmir valley and has an overwhelming Shia presence in Kargil district and are profoundly pro-India, is devoid of any separatist tendency. Shia religious leaders, including Sheikh Mohammadi had repeatedly been preaching that militants in the valley by their deeds, were going against the tenants of Islam. The people of Kargil the Valley[59], Aksaichin has been the part of Ladakh.

Blessed are those who wander into
Wild valleys for they shall see nature
And through her God

–An Indian Proverb

A Ladaki Himalayan Song, the oddities of which evidently result from the accumulations of different races, reads as under:

Through the gates of the East entered the Hindu Faith
Say, did you pass by way of the sacred word?
The Persian Kingdom erects the gates of the south.
Did you pass through them?
The celestial message of China opens to us the western gates.
How did you pass the way of the Chinese Sign?
And the gates of the north belong to Gessar Khan.
How did you pass the way of the sword stroke?
Did you pass the gates leading to Lhasa, where lies the way
Of the seekers of truth?
The east - the gates of India. There, hallowing the sacred
Word and custom, we rested.
The Persian kingdom possesses the gates of the south.
There we revered the border of the noble ones.
The celestial message of China opened to us the western gates.
Affirming the dates it gave us happiness,
The gates to the warrior, Gessar, are on the north.
By the clash of swords we passed these nations.
And through the gates of Lhasa, seeking for truth.
We passed, testing in silence our spirit.

Another meaningful Ladakhi Song in praise of Lord Buddha reads:

One is visited by wisdom and one is only by onlooker.
Some can achieve wholly naught, therefore one must test
Himself here.
But to him who already comes with wisdom there is special bliss.
Does the High One need the wisdom of nine signs?
And does the mediocre one need the same?

Are you coming as friend of high estate or do you only desire a purse?

Did you come without threats?
Do you wish the covenant of friendship?
There are three kinds of enemies.
There are three kinds of friends.
Would you enumerate them?
There are three enemies:
An enemy who induces sickness,
An enemy who hates the spirit.
An enemy who avenges in bloodshed.
We did not come as enemies.
We are friend to you.
We name three friends:
Our Liberator Buddha,
The union of a harmonious family,
The union of love and blood.
Here are the three friends.
Verily, it is so.

Buddhist Ladakh is known for its monuments, monasteries, fairs and festivals. Feasting, dancing and folk songs mark joyous occasions like marriages, births, and advent of spring and harvesting. There are at least 14 main festivals – Spituk Gustor, Dosmoche, Stok Guru Tse-Chu Matho Nagrang, Buddha Purnima, Hemis Tse-Chu, Yuru Kangyat, Zanskar Karsha Gustor, Phyang Dakthok Tse-Chu, Thiksay Gustor, Chemday Angchok, Galdana namchot and Losar. Only five of these festivals have been celebrated upto June. The remaining are celebrated from July till December when Losar is celebrated. Four festivals – Hemis- tse-Chu, Yuru Kangyat, Zanskar Karsha Gustor and Phyang Tesedup – are celebrated in July.

There are three main gumpas or monasteries, which included Phyang Tsedup, Lamayuru and Changthang. There are at least 80 smaller monasteries under this group. There are 14 other main monasteries under other categories in the region. There are five main monasteries in the region. Each is headed by Rimpoche, the chief religious priest. They are Khenpo Rimpoche of Thiksay Monastery, Changlse Chosjey of Ridzog Monastery, Kushak Bakula

of Spethup Monastery, Stakna Rinpoche of Phyang Monastery. Kushak Togdan Rimpoche is also the Minister of State for Ladakh Affairs and Planning in the Farooq Abdullah government in Jammu and Kashmir.

Ladakh is the country of the Lamas. These people are basically Buddhists i.e., belonging to the Tantrik Mahayan sect. Ladakh is said to be the centre of the Buddhist culture and learning of the Middle ages. The doors of Ladakh were opened to tourists only in 1974 after it had been closed during the 2nd world War.

There has been very little archaeological exploration in Ladakh. S.S. Gergan points to the existence of several Buddhist antiquities in Ladakh dating from the time of the Mauryas and Kusshanas. According to him, figures of the Buddha and other Buddhist deities, wrought in hard granite as well as reliquary monuments connected with Buddhism, are found at several places in the Ladakh valley. Colossal figures of future Buddha Maitreya, modelled on older Gandhara types belonging to the third and fourth centuries. A.D., are found at Mulbe, Kar-tze-k'ar (aKar-rtze-mkhar) and So (Sod). An Ashokan stupa or cho-tan (mchod-rten) is said to exist at Tiri Village in the Upper Indus gorge. Another stupa of Kanishka's time with inscriptions in Brahmi, Gupta and Tibetan-Bhote scripts are found from Gilgit, Baltistan to Leh. However, from the twelfth century onwards, religious impulses and spiritual guidance were no longer received from Kashmir. Ever since, the Ladakhis have looked towards Tibet as a main source of both spiritual and cultural inspiration. Gradually, Tibetan religious and cultural diffusion became so complete that Ladakh proper came to be known as 'Indian Tibet' or 'Little Tibet'. Nawang Tsering[62], in an article "Ascending the ladder of Highest Realisation in this Life: Instruction for Retreat", writes:

Today, Ladakh represents a repository of Tibetan religious practice and culture. At present, there are about fifteen larger monasteries with a maximum of three-hundred monks and a minimum of thirty monks. These establishments function as centres of learning, providing some two-thousand monks with an education in various fields of knowledge and Practice.

Ladakh has produced a number of standard Buddhist works during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For the present purpose, the works of the Zangskari saint, Tr'ul-zig Ngag-wang tse-ring (Khrul-zig Ngag-dbang tse-ring) may be considered exemplary among indigenous writings on Tibetan Buddhist literature. Two volumes of a Dzong-khul (rDzong-khul) manuscript entitled The Life and works of Khrul-zig Ngag-dbang Tse-ring (Delhi, 1975), contain the life and works of the dr'ub-ch'en (grub-chen), an outstanding Zangskari mystic (1717-94). It was the influence of this mahasiddha and his immediate disciples who were responsible for the maintenance and renewal of Buddhist practice and culture in Zangskar and beyond. In fact, a considerable extent of the north-west borders of the Indian union have remained Buddhist up to the present day.

Ngag-wang tse-ring (Ngag-dbang tse-ring) was born at A-thing in Zangskar in the fire Bird year. During his early teens, his father entrusted him to the learned Me-me kun-ga (Me-me kun-dga) for his studies and monastic training. The teacher soon won the confidence of his promising pupil whom he taught to the best of his ability. Besides reciting and explaining the texts, the teacher would narrate many religiously-inspired stories from the scriptures. Gradually, he also made Ngag-wang tse-ring read the famous Mahayana texts, the Astasahasrika prajnaparamita, and introduced him to the grandeur of the perfection of wisdom. From Ngag-wang tse-ring's own words, we learn that he was confirmed in his decision to renounce the world and that he received the 'final push' to take his ordination after reading the thirtieth chapter of the Astasahasrika *prajnaparamita*, which had left an indelible imprint on his mind.

At the age of nineteen, Ngag-wang tse-ring was ordained as a monk at Hemis Monastery in Ladakh. Upon his return to Zangskar, he underwent training in ritualism and he studied the theoretical aspects of the Doctrine which was compulsory for every newly-ordained monk. Nevertheless, his few years' experience at the monastery evoked a general feeling of disappointment in him. He was struck by the stagnation and futility of his mechanical way of life at Bar-dan gon-pa ('Bar-gdan dgon-pa) and he drew the conclusion that mere rituals and theoretical studies would not

yield any fruitful results, unless he applied himself to a more concrete method of meditative practice which would lead to full realisation of Ultimate Truth. With this idea in mind, he left the monastery in his single minded search for insight and knowledge which would lead to Supreme Enlightenment. From this time onwards, Ngag-wang tse-ring was determined to practice the *Dharma* in the same way as his predecessors, the gurus of the Ka-gyu-pa (bKa'-rgyud-pa) lineage, among whom the great Naropa of Phullahari was the foremost yogi.

While in Zangskar, Ngag-wang tse-ring met La-ma Rang-rig (bLa-ma Rang-rig) who became his guru. La-ma Rang-rig advised Ngag-wang tse-ring that "all existential constituents (Dharma) originate in one's mind. Mind, by its very nature, is space-like. Free from grasping (in terms of 'I' and 'mine'), it is essentially pure and bright, emptiness per se manifesting itself without impediment. Whatever phenomena may arise, all of them are projections conjured up by one's own mind". He further advised his pupil that "having set out with a keen desire for insight-knowledge, meditate in a solitary hermitage at any place. If Tibet does not suit you proceed to Mon (Himalayan region); if you feel disturbed in Mon, go to Tibet as you like". Strictly following his guru's instructions regarding meditation in a solitary hermitage, Ngag-wang tse-ring spent most of his life in retreat. When he attained the age of ninety-three, he went to Naropa's cave near Dzong-khul (rDzong-khul) for his final retreat in which he stayed in dhyana for nine months. "At the level of conventional truth everything exists; but according to paramarthasatya even I , the Buddha, do not exist". Contemplating thus, at the beginning of the Wood Tiger year (1974), while sitting in the lotus posture, Ngag-wang tse-ring entered into *mahaparinirvana*.

In his writings, Ngag-wang tse-ring never wearied of urging himself and then his disciples to forsake the comforts of monasteries. The yogi hero spent his entire life in mountain retreats and was regarded as being profoundly altruistic on account of his search for the realisation of Ultimate Truth and Final Release in this life "for his own and all sentient beings' sake".

Buddhism was introduced in the Upper Indus Valley (including Ladakh) before the seventh century A.D. Buddhist

texts in Pali and Sanskrit suggest that Buddhism had reached the Punjab, Kashmir and Afghanistan several centuries before the Christian era. The Mahavamsa and Dipavamsa inform us that emperor Ashoka had sent a Buddhist mission to Kashmir and Gandhara under the leadership of Majjyantika or Madhyantika. According to Professor L.M. Joshi, the Himalayan country (Himvantpadesa) of the Pali texts possibly comprised of present-day Himachal Pradesh, Kashmir and Ladakh.

Kuldeep Singh Jamwal[63] is justified when he says in one of his article, Ladakh Spiritual high", that descriptions such as "the last Shangri-La", "the moon land", "the land of many passes" do not fully express the magic of Ladakh. Bound by two of the world's highest mountain ranges, the Karakoram and the great Himalayas, Ladakh lies at altitudes ranging from 9,000 feet at Kargil to 25,170 feet at Saser Kangri in the Karakoram ranges.

The barren landscape lying across the Asian tableland is among the highest of the world's inhabited plateaus. Despite its remoteness, this desert land is a repository of myriad cultural and religious influences from Tibet, India and central Asia. Being part of the silk route, travelling monks, scholars and traders ensure that the land never lacks in its cultural and religious diversity. The dominant form of religion practised in eastern and central Ladakh is the Vajrayana sect of the Mahayana Buddhism, which includes ancient Hindu tantric and Bon animistic rituals.

Historically, it is thought that an emissary of King Ashoka brought Buddhism to Ladakh in the third century B.C. Rejecting idol worship, its religious leaders, the lamas, ended up depicting the Buddha and many of his incarnations on murals, paintings, frescoes and sculptures in all small and big gompas. The life of the (Buddhist) inhabitants of Ladakh revolves around religious rituals. The contribution of the monasteries (gompas) and their many festivals play an important role in the life of all Ladakhis. Many gompas, over 500-900 years old, are a repository of rare treasures, images, thankas and manuscripts of holy scriptures.

Interestingly, both the red-hat and the reformist yellow-hat sects of Buddhism thrive here in harmony, and are well represented with their monasteries flourishing in central Ladakh, the cradle of

Buddhism. The important gompas that are under the former sect are the Lamayuru, Phyang, Hemis and Chemrey monasteries of which Lamayuru and Hemis are major centres. The reformist Ge-lugs-pa (yellow-hat) sect has the Thikse, Likir, Ridzong and Spitok gomas under its control.

The approach to most gompas is generally lined with *mani* walls and chortens. Chortens are semi-religious shrines containing relics of lamas and religious scriptures, while the mani walls made of stone have holy figures and prayers inscribed on them. The outer walls and the entrances of gompas have a number of prayers inscribed on them. The outer walls and the entrances of gompas have a number of prayer wheels that are rotated by pilgrims and lamas. The inscription on these brass or copper prayer wheels is "*Om Mani Padme Hum*". The accepted form of translation runs thus: "Oh, thou jewel in the lotus", usually referred to the Buddha or to Avalokiteshvara, his Tibetan incarnation.

Along the banks of the mighty Indus river, that runs from Tibet to the south-eastern Ladakh and flows in the northwestern direction, the small villages from Upshi right up to Khaltse have some of the oldest and revered Buddhist monasteries or gompas tucked amid small valleys and inaccessible hilltops. The Kargil region has a predominantly Shiite Muslim population, which has Persian style imambaras in the region. As one proceeds from Mulbekh on the Kargil-Leh highway, the giant rock sculpture of the Chamba statue opens up the land of the gentle Buddhists of Ladakh.

One of the oldest monasteries in this region is the lamayuru, barely a few kilometers from the Fotu-la pass at 4,094 m built at the end of the 10th Century by Rinchen Zangbo. The gompa has an impressive 11-headed, 1,000-eyed image of Chenrezig or "Avalokiteshvara". Although the monastery once had a number of lamas and religious students at the turn of the last century, now there are fewer than 20 of them and they spend their time in prayer and looking after the rare images, *thankas*, and holy manuscripts.

The Lamayuru festival, which coincides with the Buddhist new year, held in February. However, the locals and western tourists look forward to a festival held in July each year - masked

dancers enact many stories from folklore and religion that celebrate courage and the victory of good over evil. Lamayuru is also believed to have been a sacred site for the pre-Buddhist religion Bon. This monastery has some of the oldest relics and artifacts, in mint condition. The head lama here is extremely kind and friendly.

The jewel among central Ladakh's religious cities is Alchi, 70 km from Leh, on the Leh-Kargil Road (across the Indus). Even though regular worship was given up centuries ago, the lamas of the Likir gompa have taken care of the monastery. Comprising five temples in a attractions is the prayer room dedicated to goddess Tara, with 23 images of her various manifestations. The monastery has more than 120 yellow-hat monks. Students come here from Ladakh and Zanskar to study Buddhism. The head lama is also the head lama of the Shankar gompa at Leh. Till recently, the head lama of the monastery represented Ladakh in Parliament. The chapel of Kali Mata (Paldan Lamo in the Tibetan language) is very impressive, and is reputed to be a 1,000 years old. A beautifully serene statue of the Buddha is another attraction.

Leh and its outskirts have perhaps the largest number of gompas, stupas, mani walls and chortens. As one enters the city there are a number of stupas and prayer wheels in the vicinity of the grand Leh Palace, now in ruins. However, the Modern day stupas, Ladakh Shanti, built by a Japanese monk of the Nippon-xan Myohou-xi (Hoke-Kyo) sect on a hilltop is an example of aesthetic beauty. It has the most delicate murals on its outer walls. Barely 3 km from Leh is the Shankar gompa.

On the outskirts of Leh, on the Leh-Manali Road, the Indus valley opens up after Choglamsar. The landscape here is more like the Kashmir Valley with huge marshy expanses and beautiful aquatic vegetation. Majestic gompas, Shey, Tikse, Stok, Stakna and Hemis, are accessible on the Leh-Manali highway, all with in a radius of 50 km.

The Shey monastery, 15 km from Leh Lehon to the left side of the road is the first major gompa. Lhachen palgyion, regarded as the first king of Ladakh, built the gompa and the summer capital of the Ladakhi kings nearly 500 years ago. The panoramic

view of Zanskar range of mountains on the southern side, and the fertile Indus valley is a sight to remember. To the east lies the Tiksegompa. The old Shey palace has the distinction of being the largest golden Buddha statue in Ladakh. The majestic statue, 7.5m high (two storey high) is crafted out of gilded copper sheets and gold lead. Erected by King Dalden Namgyal in the middle of the 17th century, the statue has holy sacrificial offerings of grain and jewels, mantras and rare images on its inside. Figures of Padma Sambhava, dogzang Guru and Limbuni and two flutes are installed on the right side.

A festival is held in July in Shey and prayers are offered for the well-being of the universe. More often than not, a visitor will find the inner sanctum sanctorum locked in the daytime. However, villagers and lamas are very helpful in finding the keys to the palace and the gompa - a touching gesture indeed.

A beautiful drive, another 5km down the road brings a line of chortens, into view. Around the bend of a small hilltop the Valley comes into view almost suddenly. The visitor is spellbound by an array of ladakhi houses in a village dominated by an imposing structure. The Tikse (or thiksey) monastery provides a panoramic view of the Indus valley. Across the Indus on to the right, one can see Stok village, which was once a royal palace and now houses a museum of rare Ladakhi artifacts. It is reputed to be more than 500 years old and has the largest number of yellow-hat monks, some 120 in 1994, in any gompa in Ladakh. A new inner prayer room has a magnificent and enormous 15m. Buddha in the sitting posture.

The ascent to the monastery from the road is difficult in the rare field atmosphere. The prayer room walls are beautifully decorated with wall paintings. Tikse possesses a large collection of hand written and painted religious scriptures and books. Another attraction is the mural of kali, which remains covered except on a particular holy day once every 12 years.

Most of the Gompas have paintings of the Kalachakra, usually on walls of the inner payer rooms. Tikse village and the gompa from a far look very much like the Potala gompa and palace of Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. No account of Ladakh's

exquisite monasteries can be complete till one visits the famous and on the Leh-Manali road. The gompa was founded under the patronage of the namgyal royal dynasty, the ruling family of Ladakh. Also founded by the royal family were the Phyang and the Chemrey gompas as penance by king Tashi Namgyal 16th Century, who had perpetrated violent acts in succeeding the throne. The Hemis gompa and its under-gompas belong to the red-hat Kar-gyut-pa sect of the Tibetan monasticism. Hemis is one of the richest gompas of Ladakh, and has a priceless collection of gold statues, stupas and jewels.

The unique collection of rare thankas is considered the largest in Ladakh and Tibet. The rare artifacts are displayed only once every 12 years (the next time will be in 20004). However, to the outside world, Hemis is known for its festival, which is held every year either in the second half of June of the first half of July. Mask dances are held in the open courtyard. There are so many other interesting gompas unknown in Ladakh. A case in point is the Zanskar region, which is very well endowed with exquisite and somewhat different style of gompas.

Ladakh represents, on of the last bulwarks of the survival Tibetan culture in its natural environment. Here, in the imposing scenery of the Himalaya, the religion (Tibetan Buddhism), the art, the architecture, the Tibetan language, the folklore, are still a living reality, although the country is going through a serious crisis since the sealing of the northeastern borders with Tibet by the Chinese military invaders[64]. All through the centuries, the mountain passes had been freely crossed, fostering a continuous cultural exchange among the people of the high Tibetan plateau.

CORE OF INDIAN NATIONHOOD

John Stoes Singer, in his book "The Might of Nations", defines nationalism as "a peoples sense of collective destiny through a common past and the vision of a common future". For decades India has tacitly endorsed this definition. Then, why we see sudden loss of faith in "collective destiny" and "vision of a common future".

The issue of Jammu & Kashmir is at the core of Indian nationhood. The vast majority of Muslim brethren is firmly opposed

to terrorism. Osama Bin Laden's Al-Qaida terrorist network's remark on Kashmir is serious issue. Al-Qaida's appeal to the USA not to help Hindus against Muslim in Kashmir is mischievous and serious Challenge. The problem in Kashmir was not the result of a Hindu Muslim conflict in the valley and elsewhere, but the upshot of cross-border terrorism supported and funded by Pakistan.

The Taliban and Al-Qaida activists have launched a relentless propaganda war against the American's army in Afghanistan. The warning issued by Osama Bin Laden's Al-Qaida outfit to America, targeting India, not to back "Hindus against Muslims" in Kashmir is actually meant to raise the communal temperature in India.

The world "communalism", is derived from "community" and means separatist tendencies. During independence struggle the attitude of the British towards communal tension was complex. As humanitarians they deplored it and perhaps did what they could to ameliorate it. But as a Imperialists they found it a useful convenience in that it furnished them a very strong pretext for remaining in India[65].

We blamed the British for Hindu-Muslim conflict so long as British controlled India. Then we lulled ourselves into the fond belief that the "communal problem" had been finally solved by the partition in 1947, and that we could settle down to solving the problems of poverty and social injustice. But the belief has been shattered by the increasing frequency of riots staged by Muslim hooligan[66]. The Muslims in India are, by and large, the same people as the Hindus, except for microscopic minority, which takes pride in its descent from foreign forefathers, and owe its allegiance to international Islamic Movement. The Muslims in India share a lot with the Hindus in such externalia as race, language, dress, moors and manners.

Generally, the word "Hindu" is loosely used in the sense of religion. But the word "religion" has been defined as "a system of faith and worship". Clearly Hinduism is not "religion" in that sense. At the most, it is confederation of religion compassing within its fold various systems of faith, and worship.

The word "Hindu" is like the word "Englishman". The word "Englishman", does not give an idea of the person thinking as

regards God, religion and way of worship. Englishman may be a Protestant, a catholic, Jew, or even an atheist. The idea that the word "Englishman" Conjures up before our mind is that of a person in whom the salient features of English national life have found expression. Similarly, the word "Hindu" stands for a person through whom the salient features of our national life have found expression. However, the words like Christianity and Islam stand for "religion", and the word '"Hindu" stands for nationality, nationhood, a way of life. As such, the people of India inclusive of Jammu & Kashmir are at the core of Hindu Indian nationhood and are opposed to trans border terrorism.

Pakistan is fully aware of the growing impatience of India with cross-border terrorism and that is why General Musharraf rang up Atal Behari Vajpayee, the Prime Minister to condemn the attack on J&K Assembly building on October 1, 2001 as a terrorist attack. Terrorist attacks in Kashmir Valley are a live issue and surely call for international attention and also intervention. India fully supports the action against Bin Laden and the Taliban but seeks support for its lonely long drawn battle against terrorism.

Though it is absolutely unfair to label all Muslims as terrorists, at the same time we must not forget that all terrorists operating in Jammu & Kashmir are, in fact, Muslims. They may belong to organisations with different names like Al-Qaida, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Toiba, Hizbul Mujahideen but this does conceal the Obvious fact that all of them claim that they have been enjoined by the Holy Quran to wage Jehad. They some may argue that these Jehadis are fringe elements and do not represent Islam or Muslims in general, it is all the same true that Muslims in many countries have come out in support of the perpetrators the September 11, attacks on WTC, New York and Pentagon, Washington and have denounced the USA action in Afghanistan.

TERRORISM: ANTI-ISLAM AND ANTI JEHAD

"Islam is the best religion and Muslims are the worst followers".

–George Bernard Shaw

The atrocities committed in New York, Washington the Pittsburg on September 11, 2001 in the name of Islam corroborate what George Bernard Shaw wrote, about Islamic Fundamentalism.

Islamic fundamentalism is hostility to modernity and change accompanied by a very, narrow idea of what Islam was. There was an obsession with dress codes and learning the Quran by heart and ensuring that women did not start thinking of getting jobs or getting too educated. Every woman was in purdah and according to the men they were happy that way. There was a cloistered, medieval air about the villages and an almost obsessive fear of change. Some considered the tenets of Islam almost as if they were afraid that if they did not do so then their identity would be destroyed.

The most worrying thing about this idea of Islam was that it seemed to be an idea that was in direct conflict with modernity and change. Modernity was somehow seen as an enemy of Islam.

–Tavleen Singh

M. Riaj Hasan, a UK-based NRI, who has worked and travelled widely in Muslim countries, asserts:

Islam intrinsically a religion of peace and brotherhood can be responsible for such an apocalyptic act. Islam, with over one billion followers in 55 Muslim countries, extends from Gambia to Indonesia. Muslims also live in Europe and North America and account for 1 to 5 per cent of the total population of these regions. France has the biggest Muslim population (six million) in Western Europe. The total Muslim population of the USA was three million in 2000, of which some 10,000 Muslims serve in the US armed forces. Although there are no Muslim Senators or Congressmen in the USA at present, the House of Commons and the House of Lords in the UK have each two Muslim members. There is hardly any profession in Western Europe and North America in which Muslims have not made their mark. Most of them came to the West as economic migrants or in pursuit of higher education.

Today the tall and slender minarets of mosques and Islamic cultural centres dot the skylines of major cities in Europe and

North American. Among the 6,000 dead or missing in the WTC bombings the murder number of Muslims has been estimated at between 500 and 1,500.

Islam was at the pinnacle of its power from the 8th to the 15th century AD when it ruled over Spain and, as many historians now acknowledge, Islamic civilians became the cradle of European Renaissance and held the torch of medicine, science, arts and astronomy. It has been in slow decline since then and it probably reached its nadir on September 11. Muslims all over the world now seem to live in the past. Whether you ask them about the absence of democracy in the 55 Muslim countries in the world, or about what Islamic economics is, or about the status of women in Islam or the Islamic attitude towards fine arts and music, the only answer you get is: 'Ah! What the Muslims (or the Muslim countries) are following is not Islam'. The gulf between what a Muslim does and what says has become so wide that it is almost impossible to bridge it. Islam is now a religion of paradoxes and its practice is totally inconsistent with its preaching.

Islam that is being practised today looks different to that preached by prophet Mohammed (PBUH) 1422 years ago. Practising Muslims all over the world may be following the five basic tenets of this great religion strictly but the Talibanisation of Islam had started long before the Pakistani ISI, the American CIA and the Saudi secret service created Talibanism to achieve their respective ignoble political ends. Islam today has become synonymous with the ultra-orthodox Sunni Wahabism of Saudi Arabia or the extremism of such splinter groups as the Sipah-e-Sahaba of Pakistan or the Hamas and Hizbollah of Palestine.

The just, caring and compassionate system of government that Islam stipulates seems to have ended with the four Great Caliphs of Islam, whose exemplary reigns are held in awe by all Muslims of the world even today.

Even today a majority of the Muslim countries are ruled by tinpot monarchs or dictators or by the ocracies. The immense wealth of some of the oil-rich countries is being squandered on the protection of the rulers and their families by foreign powers while the people live under poverty, fear and oppression. Although

the Quran forbids any type of compulsion, the Muslim rulers are imposing their own version of Islam on their subjects. Fourteen centuries after its birth, Islam has ended up with the Taliban, whose sole aim is to take Islam back to the Dark Age.

A Hadith attributed to the Prophet seems to be true today: "A people get the ruler they deserve". No other religion offers the same rights and equality to both women and men as Islam does. Annie Besant wrote: "I often think that a woman is more free in Islam than in Christianity. In the Quran, The law about women is more just and liberal". But look at the status of women in many Muslim countries. They are treated worse than chattels.

The two Islamic practices or traditions that are mainly responsible for the current Islamophobia are "Fatwa" and "Jihad". These are the two most abused words of Islamic vocabulary today. They simply mean "opinion" and "struggle" respectively (on an international scale, Jihad also means a just war). The institution of Fatwa seems to have come about for the early converts to Islam who needed some quick guidance on Islamic way of life. A mufti or learned person was appointed to give Fatwas. But today Fatwas are given invariably by self-appointed muftis and mullahs and the total number of Fatwas in circulation in the Islamic world may run into millions. According to Michael Griffin, the author of an authoritative book on the Taliban, the Deoband School of Sunni thought in India alone "issued nearly a quarter of a million Fatwas on the minutiae of everyday life since the beginning of the 20" century".

No other word describes more accurately the struggle or striving that a Muslim has to undertake all his life to better himself/herself than Jihad. But Muslims today seem to wage Jihad against tier own families and their own neighbours. Whether it is a minor communal riot in India or the uprising by some Muslim terrorist groups elsewhere in the world, the word Jihad is immediately invoked. Only certain designated persons in any Muslim community or country can declare Jihad but today every Muslim seems to have bestowed on himself/herself the right to declare Jihad.

The Indian Muslims, including the Kashmiri Muslims, are the perhaps the most fortunate religious minority in the world

today because they live in a truly secular, pluralistic democracy in the world. Since Independence, they have left a distinct mark in every walk of Indian life. Perhaps they are also the most enlightened and educated Muslim minority anywhere in the world. It is a paradox that the partition was championed by an educated, secular Muslim elite and not by the contemporary religious leaders and institutions.

Pakistan, which was created as a 'homeland' for Indian Muslims, was subsequently partitioned due to the intolerance and arrogance shown by the Muslims in West Pakistan towards their co-religionists in the East. Some of the Indian Muslims who decided to move from India to their 'homeland' following the partition are still refugees or 'mohajirs' in Pakistan. Who lives in exile in the UK recently said that he wants to enlist India's support to urge Pakistan to end its discrimination against Mohajirs. The lessons learnt from the partition are extremely grave and profound for Indian Muslims and they should tell their brothers and sisters in Kashmir that their long-term future is inextricably entwined with India

To many non-Muslim Islam is an intolerant and aggressively proselytizing religion whose followers enforce conversion under the threat death, destroy shrines and idols of other religions and indulge in terrorism in the name of religion. This is because religions are often judged by what their most debased, fanatical and intolerant followers do. This, holds true in the case of Islam. Firoz Bakht Ahmed, in an article "Islam Is For Peace and Not Terrorism", writes:

Whenever there's a tragedy of the kind like the Afghan war, the Babri Masjid imbroglio, the triple talaq or the cases of fatwas against author Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses or Taslima Nasreen's Lajja, a quarrel over Islam begins and it appears that there are many Islams and as many forms of Jehad.

There is the Islam that Osama Bin Laden follows. Then there is the Islam adhered to by the Muslim intellectuals or moderate clerics like Mufti Mukarram, the Imam of the 'Shahi' Masjid Fatehpuri. Yet another form is propagated by politicians. Islam is certainly not what the Osama Bin Ladens practise or what

the so called Kashmiri Jehadis espouse. Islam propagates peace. It means submission before the almighty. It is not submission to terrorism.

JAISH-E-MOHAMMED AND HARKAT-UL-MUJAHIDEEN

There is nothing more galling than to find that the prisoner you have released turning around and launching a fierce attack on you. That's what happened to the Indian government.

The first major terrorist attack, after twelve years of insurgency, created waves of panic in Kashmir; the valley reverberated to the sound of explosions, gunfire, screams interspersed with stark, and sudden silence. Hope, if any, of a bloodied conflict, was extinguished by the vicious terrorist strike on October 1, 2001. Despite reports of terrorists in Jammu & Kashmir laying low in the aftermath of the world Trade Centre fidayeen attack on September 11, 2001 just nineteen days earlier, militants struck to the symbolically. Strike at the heart of the democracy in the Valley.

The Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly was hit by a Jaishe-e-Mohammed Fidayeen, a suicide bomber who rammed an explosive-laden jeep into its gates, blowing men, women and children into pieces. The idea of Jaishe-e-Mohammed was conceived in a dingy barrack of kot Bhalwal Jail, near Jammu. Maulana Masood Azhar, the founder of the group was lodged in the Jail for more than three years before he was set free in December,. 1999, in exchange for the passengers of the hijacked Indian Air Lines IC 814.

Masood Azhar was once the general secretary of the Harkat-ul-Ansar. Maulana Masood was arrested in April 1994 with in a month of his arrival in Kashmir from Pakistan. By the time he was set free, however, the name of the out fit had changed to Harkat-ul- Mujahideen. The name was changed because the United States had placed Harkat-ul-Ansar on the list of terrorist groups in 1997. Numerous attempts were made to free him, even before the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen hijacked the Indian Air Line plane from Kathmandu to Kandhar in December 1999. The abduction of

Britishers in June 1994, followed by similar attempts later, however, failed to secure his release.

Maulana Azhar Masood's close associate sajjad Afghani died, a year before he was swamped for the IC-814 hostages. It was around this time that Maulana Azhar began toying with the idea of floating a new outfit. After Maulana was released, he declared Jehad against United States and India. He announced, within the next few days, that he would raise an army of ten thousand youth to fight a holy war in Kashmir. This was followed by the announcement of the formation of Jaish-e-Mohhammed, meaning, the Arony of Prophet Mohammed.

Jaish-e-Mohammed has emerged as a powerful militant outfit with in just nineteen months of its formation. It has claimed responsibility for October 1, attack on the Jammu Kashmir Legislative Assembly.

Jaish-e-Mohammed has close links Osama Bin Laden's Al-Qaida network. Azhar is schooled in the conservative Deoband stream and many of his friends are supposed to be important Taliban functionaries. He has, according to intelligence sources, received massive financial support from Osama Bin Laden for his Jehad in Kashmir.

Jaish-e-Mohammed's Headquarters are at Islamabad's Main Road near Khalid Hospital Bus Stop. It is believed to have atleast thirty other offices in Punjab, Sind, including in Karachi. Jaish-e-Mohammed's address for correspondence, receiving of drafts, cheques in POB No. 1249 GPO Islamabad. Jaish-e-Mohammed runs its account in an ANZ Grindlays Bank in Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

In nutshell, "The Jaish-e-Mohammed", though not yet banned by the USA, is one of the militant Organisation that has taken a strong anti-American Stand. The outfit, funded by the Pakistani Inter Services Intelligence (ISI, is led by Maulana Masood Azhar, who was released from an Indian Jail in January, 2000, in exchange for passengers on IC-814 flight high jacked to Kandhar.

The organisation though comparatively small, yet Masood Azhar's speeches against the USA were so critical that Paksitani

authorities were forced to move him to Bhawalpur, a small town, to keep him out of public gaze.

The Jaish-e-Mohammed, a creation of ISI is also funded by West Asian Organsiations. The Jaish-e-Mohammed is active with its cadre being trained in camps in Kahuta, Hazira, Rawalkot, Palandri opposite Poonch, Aliabad, Putwal, Sialkot, Zaffarwal, Dudhnihal and Kel. The J&K assembly-bombing incident of October 1, 2001 is the latest attack by Jaish-e-Mohammed.

Britain on October 12, 2001 ordered freezing of assets of Pakistan-based militant outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed alongwith 37 individuals and organisations while the USA widened its list incorporating 39 more individuals and organisations.

The "Terrorist Mastermind", Osama Bin Laden says that he has no difficulty in finding his "mission". He considers Pakistan a sacred land abode of pure people.

Lionized as a hero for many years in Pakistan and Afghanistan, Osama Bin Laden will not easily accepted by the people as a villain. The United States Attorney General, John Asheroft has recommended to the state department the formal branding of Lashkar-e-Toiba; Jaish-e-Mohammed and several other outfits, whose finances have been frozen by the Bush administration as "Terrorist Organisations".

The Lashkar-e-Toiba, have been branded "Foreign Terrorist Organizations" (FTO), the FTO designation does provide the authority to act against individuals and organisations associated with them. But these dreaded organisations have only low-key presence in the USA. The individuals and the Organisations that provide support to such bodies, do so in such a circuitous manturn in the activities of these groups that have been behind some of the most gruesome attacks in Kashmir valley in the recent times. However, as a psychological gesture, the naming of the Organisations is a big morale booster for India.

The FTO designation of Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed is also a major embarrassment for Pakistan, considering that the Lashkar-e-Toiba is not only Lahore based but also enjoys almost open support of that government.

In the Kashmir valley, there appears to be Smug confidence among the supporters of the terrorists that USA action would not have any effect on their operations. What must be realised is that such shadowy groups have to only change their name to remain active. That is what many of them have done in the past.

According to the USA, branding "Foreign Terrorist Organisation", is a living document. The State Department is likely to expand it as it identifies and confirms additional entities that provide financial and other support to terrorist Organisations. That is, of course, one part of the story. If the fight against terrorism has to be won, some more steps are mandatory:

Washington must make sure that the terrorist groups do not hoodwink it by changing their names;

The action against the branded organisations and the individuals should come about in real time. India has been clamouring for a ban on the Lashkar-e-Toiba; Jaish-e-Mohammed and the similar organisations for the long; and

Most important, the USA should pursue all such groups with the same single minded devotion and determination that it is showing towards Taliban & Al-Qaida. If it is not in a position to do so on its own, it has to extend whole-hearted support to India in rooting them out. Of course, Pakistan will rail against such firmness, but terrorism is terrorism whether it is by an enemy or a friend of USA.

During the December 1999 Kandhar hijacking crisis, it was forced to release Maulana Azhar Masood, Omar Sheikh and Mustaq Zargar. Masood went to Pakistan and within a month formed Jaish-e-Muhammad (Army of the Prophet). Recently, Masood claimed responsibility for the October 1 suicide attack on the J&K Assembly, which killed 38 and injured 60.

In Kashmir, Jaish has been the first and only outfit to use suicide as a weapon. Before the Assembly attack, there was two other suicides attacks, on the Indian Army's 15 Corps headquarters at Badami Bagh in Srinagar.

Jaish-e-Mohammed includes all the factions of Harkat-ul-Ansar, which America declared as a terrorist organisation when

it kidnapped four tourists including an American national in Pahelgam in Kashmir in 1994.

"Masood formed Jaish after consulting Taliban leaders," said an intelligence officer. "It probably has the support of Osama Bin Laden's al-Qaida movement."

Omar Sheikh is Masood's close associate and is believed to have transferred 100,000 to the prime suspect of the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. A British citizen, Omar, 27, is a graduate in mathematics of the London School of Economics. The son of wealthy sugar mill owner in Lahore, Omar grew up in Britain and was "a bright boy, popular with his peers and very personable," said George Painter who taught him economics at forest Schools at Snares brook.

At the London School of Economics, he attended a talk on the Bosnian refugee crisis by Asad Khan, a trustee of the charity Convoy of Mercy. "Omar was very moved and volunteered to come on one of our aid convoys," said Khan. "He was a soft-spoken boy, upright and religious."

Omar visited Bosnia, returned to Britain and then vanished. Apparently, he joined Harkat-ul-Mujahideen; in 1995, he was arrested in India for the kidnapping of five tourists, including three Britons, on November 1,1994. He had wanted to secure the release of Masood, who had been arrested in February that year.

Omar went into hiding on his release after the Kandhar hijacking. Intelligence officers believe that he has been recruiting Britons of Pakistani origin to Jaish-e-Muhammad, and may have joined al Qaida. There is a lot of similarity between al Qaida and Jaish-e-Muhammad, and both practise the Deobandi form of Islam. Both the Taliban and Jaish cadres have studied together in the madrasas run by the Jamiat-e-Ulema-l-lslam (JUI) in areas in Pakistan close to the Afghanistan border.

When the Taliban captured Kabul and other towns of Afghanistan, the JUI provided thousands of fighters to the Taliban to keep the Northern Alliance a bay. It also provided assistance to Jaish-e-Muhammad, which is an extension of the Taliban in

Kashmir. Jaish-e-Mohammed believes in the same radical rules and regulations as imposed by the Taliban in Afghanistan[68].

LUCKY THIRTEEN

December 13 attack was clearly aimed at wiping out the country's top political leadership.

–L.K. Advani

On December 13 India witnessed one of the most audacious terrorist attacks - directed at the heart of its democracy. In selecting Parliament House, the five well-armed terrorists wanted to mock India, paralyze it politically and leave it totally devastated. Their plan failed but it was a very narrow miss. The World may consider it the unluckiest set of digits in the world but many does not think so.

The belief in the sinister influence of the number 13 is usually explained by the presence of 13 persons, including Jesus himself, at the Last Supper. According to Nordic mythology, however 12 gods were originally present at the banquet in Valhalla. It was the unexpected intrusion then of Loki, the spirit of strife, that made it 13 and led to the killing of Balder, favourite of the gods.

Contrary to the widely-held fear of evil influence of 13 (triskedekaphobia, as it is called), there are several instances when the number has proved lucky. The founding fathers of the United States actually appear to have had some fancy for this particular number has proved lucky.

The founding fathers of the United States actually appear to have had some fancy for this particular number. There were 13 states that signed the American Declaration of Independence. Accordingly the first American flag carried 13 stripes and 13 stars on it, the eagle too is depicted with precisely 13 feathers and even the motto "E Pluribus Unum" has just the same number of letters.

Woodrow Wilson, who became US president in 1913, made no secret of his fascination for this number. It could be a coincidence that his name contained 13 letters. But the digit of his car numbers also added up to that figure.

In New York, on January 1882, 13 intrepid young men joined hands to establish the Thirteen Club. Just to scoff at the common fear of the number, they made it a point to meet and dine together on the 13th of every month. The monthly subscription was 13 cents and life membership could be had for 13 dollars. The membership soon swelled to 1300. Associate clubs sprang up all over the US, in London and European capitals.

Lord Mountbatten too thought 13 was lucky for him. In 1922, while accompanying the Prince of Wales on his Indian tour, it was in Room No 13 of the then Viceregal Lodge that he had asked Edwina (who had come as a guest of Lord Reading) to marry him. It is now the office of the registrar. University of Delhi.

Richard Wagner, the famous composer, certainly was no respecter of traditions. Even if we overlook the fact that he was born in 1813 and had 13 letters in his name, in his lifetime he composed 13 complete operas and finished his masterpieces Flying Dutchman, Parcifal and Tanhauser all on the 13th day of the month.

Sir Francis Drake set out on his successful round-the-world voyage on December 13, 1577. Dr. Nansen, Arctic explorer, too had no hesitation about forming a team of 13 members and then embarking upon his North Pole expedition on March 13.

Apparently riches also are not incompatible with this number. For, Pierpont Morgan, one of the pillars of international finance, had his address as No. 13, Princes Gate, South Kensington. And in the entire history of the Roman Church the pontificate of Pope Leo XIII was one of the longest.

13-day government in 1996. A second stint as Prime Minister for 13 months. And Mr. Vajpayee's swearing-in again on October 13. So, dear Prime Minister, you are in good company. Good luck.

On December 13, death has looked virtually the entire political class of India, and related high dignitaries - in the face and then looked away. A suicide squad of five terrorists with grenades in backpacks, kalashnikovs strapped across their chests and murder on their mind stunned a nation. The attack was a message to them that in an environment of high political stakes

and heightened anxiety, no one was safe. The attack on Parliament was reality television at its horrific best.

All five militants lay dead, along with six security personnel and a gardener. Eighteen others, including 12 security staff and a TV cameraman, were injured. It could have been much.

As country recovers from the trauma of December 13, another date (September II) reminds us that it could have been much worse. No doubt, we must mourn the deaths of the security personnel who displayed exemplary courage to successfully save the pre- eminent citadel of the world's largest democracy. Nevertheless, much damage has been done. The damage is at once symbolic and psychological. More significantly, the terrorists have reminded us that no place in India is beyond their reach.

The country's intelligence agencies and investigative authorities seem to have already achieved a significant breakthrough in tracing a politically motivated terrorist attack, which was bravely aborted outside Parliament House in New Delhi on December 13, to the Jiash-e-Mohammad and the Lashkar-e-Toiba, which freely operate with impunity from Pakistani territory.

Rapid investigation work has identified the Lashkar-e-Toiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammed as the perpetrators of the attack. A Pakistani hand is seen in the assault, for these organisations are based there. We seem to be a "soft state" that shies away from tough decisions. To prove our toughness has almost become desirable as an end in itself, and in a situation like the present one it seems incumbent on us to choose a robust course of action.

Hot pursuit is no real option at all for India. Even a successful operation against some camps would yield little, for these can be re-established without much difficulty. A strike against terrorist training camps may not succeed. As all centres in the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir have been shifted out and the deadly Jaish-e-Mohammed is based in Karachi. Jehadi groups will love an armed attack against them to pin the government down and mobilise mass support in their fight against India. What is more, a precipitate Indian action will help Pakistan wriggle out of the present tight situation. As an old saying goes, India should

give a long rope to Pakistan wriggle out of the present tight situation. As an old saying goes, India should give a long rope to Pakistan to hang itself. And the December 13 attack on the Parliament complex is the long rope.

In his address to the BJP parliamentary party, Atal Behari Vajpayee was categorical that India could not be expected to exercise restraint in the face of the December 13 provocation. Cross-border terrorism was a manifestation of Pakistan's inability to accept a secular, democratic and forward-looking India. India's biggest achievement since Independence is without doubt the vibrancy of its democracy.

India must respond to December 13. The response, however, should not be knee-jerk, and it should not be determined by domestic pressure to "do something" quickly, but by its effectiveness and by national interest. India's present crisis can and must be overcome with the pragmatic recognition that discretion is the better part of valour.

India reserves the right to use force in self-defence and in the war against Pakistan-backed terror. The matter came up in the Lok Sabha when Mr. L.K.. Advani made a statement detailing the attack on Parliament. He also briefed the members on the progress of the probe into the attack. The Question Hour was suspended to let Mr. Advani read the four-page statement. Highlights of Advani's statement are enumerated hereunder:

The attack was executed by two Pakistan-based outfits - Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed

The main conspirator was Mohammed Afzal who was trained by the ISI in Pakistan occupied Kashmir.

Afzal was assigned the task by the Jaish chief in India, Gazi Baba.

In Delhi, the five ultras who attacked Parliament House had stayed at Mukherjee Nagar and Timarpur.

The hideouts were arranged by Shaukat Hussain.

Among other things, three police uniforms, a large quantity of ammonium nitrate and other ingredients of improvised explosive device had been seized from the hideouts.

A strong sense of unity emerged at the end of the two-day debate in the Lok Sabha on December 13 terrorist attack. True, there were a few discordant notes and also irrelevant references. But largely the speeches were crisp, thoughtful and reflecting a new determination. The one to be highly influenced was Prime Minister Vajpayee. Buoyed up by this rare show of oneness he scaled down the idea of hot pursuit, making it one of the options available to the government.

First, he was responding to the views of MPs who expressed reservations about starting a war even if it were a limited one.

Two, as is well known, the Army top brass is not very enthusiastic since fighting in the mountains in mid-winter is not a picnic.

Three, there is mounting international pressure to act with restraint, showing-increasing support to the country's case and an armed foray will reverse this.

Finally, operation Taliban is in its last lap and in a few days Pakistan's relevance in this will be over, restoring India's maneuverability.

Without naming Pakistan, the Prime Minister Mr. Vajpayee warned that country to rein in those terrorists who target the very symbol of democracy in India. Democracy is an emotive word and the West will find it difficult not to act. The notable speeches of the day came from NCP leader Sharad Pawar and Mrs. Sonia Gandhi. Mr. Pawar wanted the MPs and Ministers to be less egotistical and give preference to the imperatives of security.

"There can be no two definitions of terrorism. Terrorism cannot be divided in bits and pieces".

–Atal Behari Vajpayee

The USA as the leader of the anti-terrorism international coalition should take the December 13 attack on India's Parliament

complex by Pakistan-based terrorist groups under the guidance of the ISI as seriously as Washington did when Osama Bin Laden's men used passenger planes as missiles to strike at the symbols of the American economic and military might.

America has accepted, though in a subtle manner, that Pakistan's claim of a freedom fight going on in Kashmir is false. The jehadis misusing the fair name of Islam are terrorists and deserve the treatment meted out to their counterparts in Afghanistan.

Terrorists cannot be equated as freedom fighters. The idea that one person's terrorist is another's freedom fighter cannot be sanctioned. Freedom fighter or revolutionaries do not blow up buses containing non-combatants; terrorist murderers do. Freedom fighters do not assassinate innocent, businessmen or hijack and hold hostage innocent men, women and children; terrorist murders do. It is disgrace that democracies should allow the treasured word "freedom" to be associated with acts of terrorists.

Abraham Lincoln was a humane kindhearted person but when confronted with the threat of vivisection of the country be secessionists and terrorism he despots his humanness took arms and crushed with all the might forces posing threat to the integrity and unity of the United States of America. If America today is one strong country, its integrity and strength can in no small measure be traced to the determined stand taken by Abraham Lincoln during the American civil war to prevent the vivisection of the country[69].

India's struggle against terrorism a part of the worldwide effort to promote the rule of gun[70]. Apex Court in Hitendra Vishnu Thakur's[71] case philosophised: It may be possible to describe 'terrorism' as use of violence when its most important result is not merely the physical and mental damage of the victim but the prolonged psychological effect it produces or has the potential of producing on the society as a whole. There may be death, injury, or destruction of property or even deprivation of individual liberty in the process but the extent and reach of the intended terrorist activities travels beyond the effect of an ordinary crime capable of being punished under the ordinary penal law

of the land and its main objective is to overawe the Government or disturb harmony of the society or "Terrorise" people and the society and not only those directly assaulted, with a view to disturb even tempo, peace and tranquility of the society and create a sense of insecurity. A 'terrorist' activity does not merely arise by causing disturbance of law and order or of public order.

The fallout of the intended activity must be such that it travels beyond the capacity of the ordinary law enforcement agencies to tackle it under the ordinary penal law. Experience show that "terrorism" is generally an attempt to acquire or maintain power or control by intimidation and causing fear and helplessness in the minds of the people at large or any section thereof and is a totally abnormal phenomenon. What distinguishes 'terrorism' from other forms of violence, therefore, appears to be the deliberate and systematic use of coercive intimidation[72].

When Parliament functioned in a normal manner on December 14, it clearly demonstrated the nation's resolve not to flinch in the face of terror. The terrorist's objective is it effects a breakdown of normal life. Proceeding with business as usual is the most fitting rebuff to his nefarious intentions. Still, it might not be a bad idea to learn from the US, where President George W. Bush and Vice-president Dick Cheney have stopped appearing in public together. Indeed, Mr. Cheney has been kept in 'secure locations' for so long that jokes have sprung up about his sightings being as rare as those of the Loch Ness monster.

December 13, 2001 has been as attack not just on a building but on what is the very heart of our system of governance, on what is the symbol and the keystone of the largest democracy in the world. By the attack, the terrorists have yet again flung a challenge at the country. The nation accepts the challenge. We will liquidate the terrorists and their sponsors wherever they are, whoever they are - as our valiant security forces have done in this particular instance.

Pakistan has emerged as the nerve centre of terrorism and jihad forces. Most of the terrorist outfits are but part of the Pakistani establishment. If the world is waiting for more proof, it is either sheer stupidity or self-deception. One cannot go on

fighting the symptoms of terrorism and continue to allow it flourish in its breeding ground. Terrorism can be finished only if its fountainhead is destroyed.

Pakistan any be the only country in the world which has at least 10,000 'non-military personnel' ready to give their lives anytime, a top Pakistani security official said. The official, said 'jehadis' or militants were in large numbers in Pakistan ready to die anytime.

"Pakistan's intelligence agencies have long had covert ties to militant groups in Pakistan ties nurtured to help successive Pakistani governments support the now-defunct Taliban, as well as pressing Pakistan's battle against Indian troops in Kashmir", The Washington post reported.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah has reiterated fears that Afghan Mujaheeds might sneak into the state in the coming summer months to boost terrorist activities. "Our state is comparatively more exposed and vulnerable to the onslaught of the ongoing proxy war and there is possibility that Afghan Mujaheeds may infiltrate in the coming summer months", Abdullah said at a conference organized by the Akali Dal on March 24, 2002.

An earlier report quoting the Jammu and Kashmir Police said some wireless intercepts and confessions of arrested militants suggested that the ISI was trying to push Taliban forces evacuated from Afghanistan into the state to boost militancy.

Abdullah said despite the heavy deployment of army and paramilitary forces along the border, infiltration of trained militants was continuing unabated.

"Pakistani leaders should understand that the proxy war could not give them anything so far and it would be a futile exercise to patronize militants and push them to J&K", he said.

On the communal clashes in various parts of the country, Abdullah said as all the religions teach lessons of peaceful co-existence, those indulging in bloodshed can never be considered religious-minded.

The Prime Minister on March 24, 2002 said India was ready to improve relations with Pakistan, provided Islamabad honours the Shimla Agreement, Lahore Declaration and stops cross-border terrorism in reality.

Addressing a gathering at the historic Ridge in Shimla, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee said Pakistan's behaviour proves that it is not interested in peaceful relations with India. Lashing out at Pakistan for sponsoring militant activities which had led to terrorist attacks on parliament and the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, Mr. Vajpayee said: "Continuous disturbance on the Indo-Pak border clearly points to the Pakistani intention".

Accusing Islamabad of violating the Shimla Agreement of 1972, the Prime Minister said: "despite Pakistan's commitment that it won't resort to war and would sort out all the issues with India through dialogue, it still attacked and was taught a lesson for its Kargil misadventure".

In a clear indication that no scaling down of India's military mobilisation is on the cards, Mr. Vajpayee said, "India needs still to be careful and cautious on the issues of defence and internal security". The Prime Minister condemned the Godhra incident and the killings that took place in Gujarat in its wake. "I am not talking of those outsiders who attack India, but the people who are living in our country should live peacefully", Vajpayee said.

The Pundits have been forced to leave the valley. They have been gagged and silenced in the Rishivae. The echoes of Kashmir Shaivism are no longer heard in the valley. Hari Nam is no longer heard in the cradle of Hindu civilization, the Sharda Peeth is in occupied Kashmir and Siddh Peeth in Hinglaj now in Pakistan.

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the way to Hemis gompa. The Hemis gompa and its under-gompas belong to the red-hat Kar-gyut-pa sect of the Tibetan monasticism. Hemis is one of the richest gompas of Ladakh, and has a priceless collection of gold statues, stupas and jewels.

The unique collection of rare thankas is considered the largest in Ladakh and tibet. The rare artifacts are displayed only once every 12 years (the next time will be in 20004). However, to the outside world, Hemis is known for its festival, which is held every year either in the second half of June of the first half of July. Mask dances are held in the open courtyard. There are so many other interesting gompas unknown in Ladakh. A case in point is the Zanskar region, which is very well endowed with exquisite and somewhat different style of gompas.

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pakad tu dast farishton ka, gulam unka kahta ja

–Manssor

41. *Bhagavadgita*, Chapter V, verse 20:

na prahrsyet priyam prapya no dvijet prapya ca'priyam
sthirabuddhir asammudho brahmavid brahmani sthitah

42. Bhagavadgita, Chapter V, verse 21:

    bahyasparsesv asaktatma vindaty atmani yat sukham
    sa brahmayogayuktatma sukham aksayam asnute

43. *jnatum iccha jijnasa. Avagati-paryantam jnanam san-vacyaya icchayah karma... Brahmavagatir hi purusarthah. Nihsesa-samsara-bijavidyay – ady anartha-nibarhanat, tasmat brahma jijnasitavyam.* Samkara.

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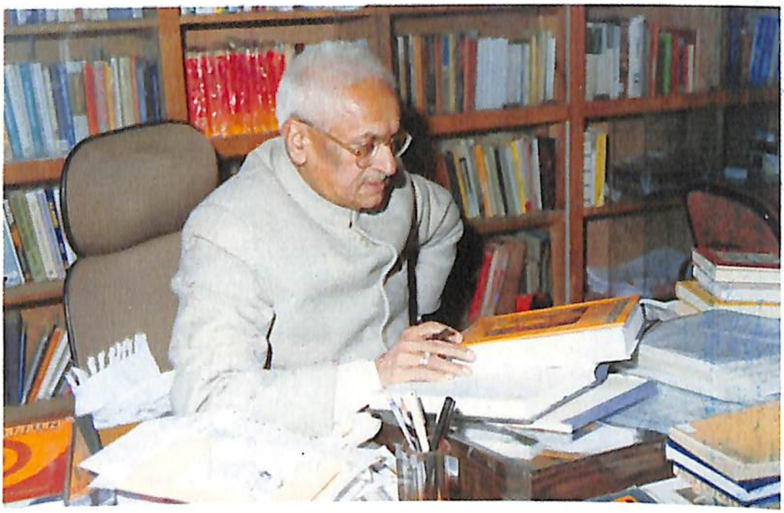
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